

Andrew Marr on
Gerry Adams

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WILL THIS BE AGASSI'S YEAR AGAIN AT WIMBLEDON?

summer of sport

OUR NEW 12-PAGE MIDWEEK SECTION TODAY

THE INDEPENDENT

3,017

WEDNESDAY 19 JUNE 1996

WEATHER Dry and bright with patchy cloud 40p (IR 45p)

Blair walks tall into Europe

ANTHONY BEVINS

Political Editor

Tom Blair yesterday went to Germany to pull off a breath-takingly bold political stroke on Europe, wearing his European colours with pride and defying the Tories to do their worst in smearing him as a man about to sell out Britain.

The Labour leader told his Bonn audience that he wanted to walk tall in Europe, not skulk on the sidelines, and in a bold speech directly took on Mr Major's attempts to represent him as a "pooch" who would "wince over" by the big, bad barons of Brussels.

He made his move from an increasing position of Labour strength and Government drift. The Westminster hotchpotch was starting to rumble with an early, f

... at Mr Major's cap, it ended by a possible ... threatened by a possible ... threat-scale violence, ... turn to full ... However, he dashed back from ... for the occasion. Mr Blair took the initiative at Prime Minister's question time to pile the pressure on Sinn Fein to end violence.

But even as he was returning from Heathrow, he got the first taste of the Tory onslaught

against his Bonn speech, with Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine, the Government's arch-European, telling BBC radio's *World at One* that Labour was selling Britain out to the Germans.

Mr Blair told the German equivalent of the CBI: "We will - and with pride - fight the election on a platform of ending this perpetual and negative isolationism and I should tell you that I think our opponents are misjudging us."

"I have no doubt at all that

Britain's future lies in the EU

and at the centre of its events,

not on the sidelines."

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the vision and others. Britain should

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On the day that Oasis became more popular than The Beatles, these albums show how pop is breaking up



Black Grape
*It's Great When You're
Straight... Yeah!*
(Radioactive)



The Chemical Brothers
Exit Planet Dust
Junior Boys' Own



Everything But The Girl
Walking Wounded
Warner Bros.



Mark Morrison
Return Of The Mack
(EastWest)



Oasis
*(What's The Story)
Morning Glory?*
(Creation)



Pulp
Different Class
(Island)



Radiohead
The Bends
(Parlophone)



Super Furry Animals
Fuzzy Logic
(Creation)



Tricky
Maxinquaye
(Island)



Various Artists
*Routes Out Of The
Jungle*
(Virgin)

Most infectious dance-rock party album of last year, replete with blues harps, electric stars and slide guitars, over which stumblebum poet Shaun Ryder mutters enigmatic raps. All the swagger of vintage 1972 Stones.

Wielding synthesizers like rivet-guns, DJ remix duo The Chemical Brothers make the kind of dance music that jungle fans can enjoy too, a fearsome punk-funk techno-metal barrage tracks as a springboard.

This folk-jazz duo's intriguing blend of spring-loaded double-time rhythms of swingbeat and G-Funk as any of the American originators. Lots of sex and drugs, but mercifully free of violence.

Leicester's own leather-clad lothario proved just as able with the seductive sounds of swingbeat and G-Funk as any of the American originators. Lots of sex and drugs, but mercifully free of violence.

Leavening the ringing guitar-rock of their debut with pensive ballads, Oasis pull out all the stops this time round. Throughout, it's Noel Gallagher's way with a tune - anybody's tune - which remains their trump card.

Pop's favourite man of the people, Jarvis Cocker on top form, rendering the myriad discomforts of desire with unflinching but droll gaze, and cheerleading through the revenge-of-the-nerds singles "Common People" and "Ms-Shapes".

Like U2 and Nirvana before them, Radiohead manage to articulate the most heartfelt, abject disaffection in the most uplifting manner. Oxford's finest has a huge US following, despite barbed English cynicism.

Part of the resurgent Welsh rock scene that also includes the Manic Street Preachers, Super Furry Animals make draft new music out of whimsical old styles, on songs about alien abduction, drug dealers and computer games.

In jungle music, the programmed snare-drum rattles along at twice the speed of the bass, a sonic relationship stretched out to supply a languid menace that evokes the angry torpor of black disaffection.

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From indie labels via big business to fame

ANDY GILL

So, it's official: Oasis are, apparently, more popular than the Beatles – and presumably, by extension, even more popular than Jesus.

According to a survey in *Music Week*, the Gallagher brothers are now more widely loved by all sectors of the British record-buying public, beating the Fab Four into second place in the All-Time Favourite Top Ten. Of course, it's only a poll, and thus best taken with a pinch or two of salt, but still, there it is, in black and white: more popular than the Beatles.

Even those who speed their days caressed by the light-orchestral balm of Classic FM, find endless fascination in the slow trickle of talk on Radio 4 or turn to old Motown compilations and that worn-out copy of Dire Straits' *Brothers In Arms*, give Oasis the vote.

The *Music Week* survey has the Gallagher brothers not only clear favourites among the under-25s, but second favourites (after The Beatles) among the 25- to 45-year-olds, too.

Ironically, it is the very fragmentation of pop during the 1980s which led many to give up on it (remember all those New Romantics floundering around in mummy's clothing or obscure rap music) that is responsible for the current popularity of Oasis.

During that decade, the music business became more a case of business than music, with the major multi-national corporations seeking to increase their market share by absorbing smaller labels like Virgin and Chrysalis, often at absurdly inflated valuations. By 1994, six huge companies – Sony, Thorn EMI, Time Warner, Bertelsmann Music Group, Polygram and MCA Matsushita – con-

For those who have lost the script since the Fab Four, an exploration of the music that makes the charts, and 10 albums which define the current trends

trolled the worldwide distribution and marketing of virtually all pop music.

The immediate effect was the imposition of cost-cutting corporate strategies on a business which traditionally operates by instinct. The result was that the in-house talent-spotters – the A&R men – lost out to the accountants. As a consequence, the independent sector which sprang up during the punk boom of the late Seventies took over most of the talent-spotting duties: all the big acts of the last ten years, from REM to Nirvana, and Pulp to Oasis, cut their teeth on small indie labels before being swallowed up by the multi-national – either directly, like REM, or through their label being acquired, like Oasis.

This fragmentation of the marketplace led to mainstream pop acts experiencing a shorter shelf-life than before, and the fringes becoming a feverish blur of activity. At the same time, the computerisation of sales returns from record shops means that the charts are less open to hype. They now reflect more accurately the true state of sales, with albums less like

Death Do Us Part' voted against recommending the contract to members, compared to 27 in favour. If approved, the deal will give starring actors 17 per cent of gross income from any programme sale, rather than the traditional "residual payment" – a fixed percentage of their original remuneration – which will continue to be used for repeats on terrestrial TV. Each actor's share of the gross income would be proportional to their original fee, with the minimum set at £50.

According to both the BBC and ITV, the residual model has made it nearly impossible to sell programming to secondary markets at an economic rate. "The residual can sometimes be more than the market price for programmes sold to cable and satellite," said a BBC insider. This is particularly true of programmes featuring a large cast.

Are Oasis the new Beatles, then? Some would say Blur's more baroque, vaudevillian arrangements are more closely reflective of the late-period Beatles style, but there's no denying that when it comes to writing brilliantly simple pop songs, Noel Gallagher has Da-

mon Album beaten hands down every time, writes Andy Gill. Like John and Paul, Noel knows the worth of a good hook, though he doesn't have anything like their reserves of originality and inspiration, preferring to plunder his hooks from pop's memory-banks.

when we respond in an Oasis song, we're usually responding at least in part to our memory of the original song which inspired it, which was never the case.

There's also the vexed question of influences: The Beatles were primarily influenced by

black music, cover versions of which helped bulk out their first few albums; indeed, it was their "whitening" of black music which proved such a revolutionary breakthrough in the Sixties, opening the door for such as the Stones and Yardbirds. Oasis, by comparison,

have no discernible black influence, which may account for their rather statuesque stage performances – they prefer the likes of Paul Weller and The Stone Roses, secondhand influences whose own grasp of black music traditions is, to put it mildly, heavily filtered.

Rock of ages: Oasis have won the right to stand alongside The Beatles as all-time greats of pop

Photomontage: Jonathan Anstee

A question of black and white influences

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business of preventing the work of our members from being broadcast widely on cable and satellite."

The result of nearly two years' negotiation, the deal is similar to the arrangements already used by the BBC in its overseas markets, which generate about £17m a year for Equity members. The results of the ballot should be announced on 16 July. Gammon's Broadway ban, arts news, page 20

New boom in cable repeats threatened by Equity vote

MATHEW HORSMAN
MEDIA EDITOR

A controversial new pay deal could open the fledgling cable and satellite markets to a tidal wave of vintage BBC and ITV repeats, depending on the outcome of a postal ballot being conducted among members of Actors Equity this week.

For the first time, favourites

such as Howard's Way or Train er could find their way onto sub-

scription channels, providing extra revenue for the BBC and ITV and generating fresh funds for members of the closed-set union of actors.

But vocal opposition by a handful of Equity board members could swing sentiment against the deal, according to union insiders. Character actress Miriam Margolyes last week resigned over the issue. Four other board members, including Tony Booth, star of 'Tu

If all actors receive a fixed percentage of their original fee, with the minimum set at £50. According to both the BBC and ITV, the residual model has made it nearly impossible to sell programming to secondary markets at an economic rate. "The residual can sometimes be more than the market price for programmes sold to cable and satellite," said a BBC insider. This is particularly true of programmes featuring a large cast.

channel's commercial success.

The BBC said last night: "The current situation makes programme sales to UK cable and satellite channels uneconomic. There is no doubt that a yes vote for royalty payments is in the best interests of Equity members, UK viewers and British broadcasters." Ms Margolyes and her colleagues accuse Equity of abandoning the best interests of its members. They claim that re-

jecting the residual arrangements will reduce the amounts artists receive from the secondary market in the future, and puts at risk the system that protects artists from exploitation.

"Some of our members think back and say, 'wasn't it nice when we had just four channels, and we knew where we stood and what we would receive?'

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news

Bleak outlook: Commission for Racial Equality reveals how conflict in the classroom leads to a life of crime and alienation



Street life: Many of Brixton's young blacks find themselves pushed into a corner without qualifications, work or hope

Photograph: David Rose

Tough lessons for young blacks

HEATHER MILLS AND REBECCA FOWLER

Yesterday, Brixton looked at its best. The sun shone, multi-cultural murals glistened on the walls, children played on the swings and even a traffic warden smiled as he pounded his volatile beat.

Days like this are to be cherished, for many of the area's young black people feel Brixton's image casts a cloud over them – a bleak picture of schools running out of control and friends being drawn into a life of crime. At best, it is difficult for them to share anything other than mixed feelings.

Kelly O'Laya, 18, is lucky enough to have completed her A-levels and sums up the mood of despair that prevails. "I can see all these kids around and I

know they should be at school. That's maybe when they choose to go down a different path, like crime. It's just not something I chose, because I suppose I was scared of getting caught. But people's attitude is unfair, there are as many people round here doing good things."

The Commission for Racial Equality says Brixton is merely a microcosm – warning yesterday that Britain's black youth face alienation as they are driven towards crime and anti-social behaviour.

Figures show that Afro-Caribbean children are four or five times more likely to be thrown out of school than their white counterparts and unemployment among the young in some ethnic minorities runs three times higher. Herman Ouseley, the CRE chairman, said that school expulsions, in particular, "were forcing children onto the streets into conflict with the police".

Mr Ouseley said it was the sense of alienation which triggered "skirmishes" in parts of the country last summer. "Bradford and Brixton came close to giving us a glimpse of the social unrest none of us wants. It is time to recognise the need to invest in young people ... so that they can reach their full potential, rather than finance their custodial arrangements in later life."

More positively, the CRE's annual report for 1995 revealed that the number of reported racial discrimination complaints had fallen from 1,937 in 1994 to 1,682 last year. Also, the contribution made by ethnic minorities was gradually being recognised by an increase in the numbers employed in many fields.

"We are able to draw some comfort from the knowledge that race relations in Britain during 1995 were as good if not better than anywhere else in Europe," said Mr Ouseley. But while ethnic minorities wanted to be treated equally and fairly, be properly educated and given jobs on merit, this was still not the experience of many.

In Brixton, they could only echo Mr Ouseley's sentiments. Many former pupils claim the schools have been sinking for some time, leaving those left without qualifications to face a desperate struggle for work.

Peter Johnson, 29, an unemployed decorator said: "They just get the second-rate teachers who have been rejected from the good schools and then sent to the ghettos. The kids get no discipline, and instead of trying to teach them, they just expel them. Then you're heading for disaster."

Youth worker Lee Parker agreed: "As soon as you take them out of the education system at an early age the only alternative is crime, and petty criminals become hardened criminals. This is a wake-up call for the Government to do something about our kids, and for schools to start taking the problem seriously."

Father accused of killing three infant children

A father killed his three babies by strangling and smothering them, a court was told yesterday.

Over a five-year period, Simon Smith's apparently healthy children – daughters Lauren, three months, and Eleisha, 10 months, and his six-month-old son Jamie – died suddenly, Stafford Crown Court was told. On each occasion he had spent time alone with them before finding them dead, it was alleged.

The deaths of Eleisha, in December 1989, and Jamie in April 1993, were put down to sudden infant death syndrome, or cot death. It was only after the examination in November 1994 into Lauren's death, which showed she died from asphyxia, that Mr Smith, 26, was arrested. He denies three charges of murder but in police interviews he admitted suffocating Lauren until she died, the court was told.

John Goldring QC, for the prosecution, described how Eleisha had been taken to Stafford District General hospital the week before her death after she had apparently suddenly stopped breathing, but nothing amiss could be found.

The following week she again collapsed during the night at the house in Stafford, which Smith shared with the child's mother, Tracy Hall. Smith had been the last person to see her, changing her nappy to stop her crying. The following morning he found her dead in her bedroom. A post mortem examination

into Eleisha's death concluded it was a case of sudden infant death syndrome.

In September 1992, Ms Hall had a second child, Jamie, again by Mr Smith. Jamie was found dead in his bed the following April. Two days before a health visitor had found him in perfectly good health.

On the night of the death the couple's next door neighbour had been babysitting and put Jamie to bed in his own home shortly before 2am. Soon afterwards, Mr Smith returned home, drunk after a party.

Again he was the last person to see the child alive. Minutes after coming home Mr Smith knocked hysterically on a neighbour's door with Jamie's dead body in his hands. "Why me? Why me? I tried everything I could," he shouted. Again a post mortem examination found a case of cot death.

In July 1994, the third child, Lauren, was born. Her mother was Rachel Playfair, Mr Smith's new girlfriend. When Lauren was just three months old Mr Smith spent a day in Stafford shopping with her. Minutes after he returned home he claimed he found the child dead on a sofa. Again she had apparently stopped breathing.

But after first denying the killing he later admitted to police he had smothered the child in the back seat of his car to stop her crying. This time a post mortem examination found the cause of death was asphyxia, the court was told.

The trial resumes today.

Hospitals braced for 'toughest year'

NICHOLAS TIMMINS
Public Policy Editor

Waiting times are likely to lengthen and new developments face postponement as the NHS faces its toughest year financially since the NHS reforms came in, health authorities and trusts warned yesterday.

A survey undertaken by the National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts (Nahat) shows that at least a quarter of trusts will only break even by cutting services and increasing waiting times for non-urgent admissions. At least one in five reckon they are unlikely to break even, and many report that rising demand for emergency services is eating into funds for waiting-list procedures.

"Generally acute trusts report that the rise in emergency admissions will have an effect on elective services, so that in-patient waiting times will either begin to increase or that planned reductions will not be achieved."

the survey of 50 health authorities and trusts shows. One trust has calculated that for some conditions waiting times will escalate from 10 to 18 months.

Measures which could ease the pressures – for example merging duplicate services – are being held up by political sensitivity in the run-up to the general election, authorities report.

"It is no secret that this is the toughest year financially since the NHS reforms came in," Philip Hunt, director of Nahat said. "We have 1.1 per cent real growth and that isn't enough. Ideally, we need 3 per cent and we can manage on 2 per cent, but 1.1 per cent is real trouble."

The picture will vary locally, Nahat believes, and some developments in services will still take place. But "very difficult choices are having to be made", Mr Hunt said. "Whilst waiting times will fall or remain on an even keel in many places, in some parts of the country they are threatening to slip back."

"If British Airways and American Airlines are not allowed to indulge in all manner of (legal) anti-competitive practice, then there is not much point in them getting into bed together in the first place."

THE ECONOMIST

June 1st 1996

virgin atlantic

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مكتبة المعلم

Shephard to bring in English grammar test for 14-year-olds

JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

A new grammar test for 14-year-olds was announced by Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education, yesterday as she continued her campaign to placate the Conservative right-wingers.

The review of English tests, which will anger teachers, comes after research from Southampton University showed that pupils were learning more grammar in foreign language lessons than in English lessons.

Labour yesterday accused Mrs Shephard of making the announcement to try to divert attention from the defeat in the House of Lords late on Monday of plans for a nation-wide nursery voucher scheme.

Mrs Shephard had accepted recommendations from government exam advisers that 14-year-olds, who must all take national tests in English, maths and science, should face an additional exam in grammar, spelling and punctuation.

At present, English consists of two papers, a comprehension and essay and a Shakespeare

Mistakes made by pupils

Some of the most common grammatical errors are:

- She come to my house
- I was scared so I run away
- We was going to the shop
- I threw it out the window
- The government think they can do what they like
- I would of done it if I could of
- Getting off of the bus
- Blood is thicker than water

Among the most common misspellings are:

- Definately
- Separate
- Miscellaneous
- Accommodation
- Carmine
- Comittee
- Equally
- Leisure'
- Orchestra

and punctuation, could not be introduced until the year after next but the weight given to spelling, punctuation and grammar could be increased from next year.

Mrs Shephard said she was asking the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority to review English tests "to ensure that they reflect the emphasis the curriculum puts on correct English". She added: "If children are to learn to express themselves clearly and effectively and make full use of our wonderful language, they need to be taught how the English

language works. This may seem a remarkably obvious message but it is one that sadly was lost by the trendy teaching of the Sixties and Seventies."

Anne Barnes, general secretary of the National Association for the Teaching of English, said that English teachers would be furious if such a test were introduced. The teachers argue that grammar should be tested through writing, and not through a separate test.

The Southampton report found that English teachers tended to concentrate on increasing pupils' creativity and

teaching them about writing styles while foreign language teachers taught grammar in a more formal way.

David Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman, said: "Gillian Shephard is clearly beleaguered on all sides. Her announcement today comes several weeks after I made a similar back-to-basics speech and it is surely no coincidence that it comes on the day when the Lords have decided that a pilot scheme for nursery vouchers should properly evaluate before it becomes a national scheme." Vouchers plan, page 6

Cash secure for 2000 exhibition at Greenwich

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

The planned Millennium Exhibition to mark the start of the 21st century will definitely take place at Greenwich in south-east London, it was announced last night. After months of doubt and controversy about the funding of the £500m exhibition, Virginia Bottomley, Secretary of State for National Heritage, announced that the event's future was assured.

"The exhibition at Greenwich will go ahead and the country can look forward to a celebration of which it can be very proud indeed," she said yesterday. "On the basis of the substantial support received from the private sector, we are happy for work on the exhibition at Greenwich to continue."

Mrs Bottomley, who is chairman of the Millennium Commission, which met yesterday afternoon, would not reveal how much money had been received.

Sir Peter Levene, the business and government adviser, told the Millennium Commission that he was now confident of securing enough private-sector backing for the

event. After weeks of behind-the-scenes arm twisting in Whitehall, companies have been persuaded to drop their initial reluctance and offer support.

While the target figure of £144m had still to be met, Sir Peter told the commission he felt confident it would come once work on the site had started.

Sponsors had been invited to take a pavilion for £12m each. So far, only British Airways, British Telecom and the City of London Corporation have publicly pledged their support. Others thought to be interested include GEC, British Aerospace, Amec, BAA, and London Electricity.

Sir Peter's report to the commission followed a recent emergency meeting between Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, and captains of industry called after business reluctance became apparent.

Under the original scheme, the commission would put up £200m from National Lottery receipts, the private sector would find £144m, and gate receipt and licensing deals would account for the remaining £156m.

Without sufficient private backing, ministers were contemplating scaling down the event or scrapping it. At the

time, Mr Heseltine declined to comment on the allegation.

Overseas lottery aid 'too low'

REBECCA FOWLER

The £25m given by the National Lottery Charities Board to overseas projects has been criticised as being too low by British aid groups working in the Third World.

Charities, including the Red Cross, Oxfam and Action Aid, are concerned that the figure is only a fraction of the board's overall £2bn budget and does not reflect the public's commitment to overseas charitable work - which attracts 15 per cent of all donations.

However, the board which came under fire from the Prime Minister last week for supporting charities that work with gays, lesbians and prostitutes, defended the amount yesterday and denied it should be doubled.

Tessa Baring, a board member, said: "£25m will not solve the world's problems, but if we ensure it is used effectively to tackle long-term solutions we believe it can make a considerable impact."

The money, which will be distributed among long-term projects in Asia, Africa, South and Central America and the Caribbean, may be revised next year, according to the board.

But Anna Feuchtwang, of Oxfam, said: "They've got a difficult balancing act, but whatever way you look at it, it's a very small amount. It should reflect public support for overseas aid." The charities defended the decision to send lottery money overseas against criticisms that it should be concentrated in Britain. It will benefit longer

term projects, such as disaster relief campaigns, which do not traditionally attract public donations.

Dominic Byrne, for Action Aid, said: "We believe the board should have announced a grant programme of at least £50m in line with public support."

Following criticism of the allocation of grants, Tim Hornsby, the board's chief executive, will send a full report to the Virginia Bottomley, the Heritage Secretary, this week, explaining how decisions were taken to fund a total of nine projects which included work with prostitutes, gay men and lesbians and deportees.

Mr Hornsby said: "We try to assess grants successfully, as we are legally obliged to do, and choose on merit."

Dressed for the races: Setting off from Waterloo station in London for Royal Ascot yesterday, on the opening of the four-day meeting at the Berkshire racecourse. Ascot reports, pages 10 and 11. Photograph: Brian Harris

Countryside 'under threat from advertising clutter'

WILL BENNETT

For decades the British countryside has had a more tranquil air than the rural areas of France or the United States. But conservation groups say that Government proposals to relax controls on advertising are about to change that.

After crossing the Channel

apparent. French roadsides are lined with advertisements for drinks, cars, tyres and in recent years the hypermarkets so beloved by the British.

In the US, main routes across the heart of the continent are disfigured by billboards proclaiming the virtues of Coca Cola, Marlboro, and the like. Until now more than half of Britain has been protected from

such visual intrusion by being declared "Areas of Special Control of Advertisements" where poster hoardings are banned and other advertisements are strictly regulated. The Government is now planning to relax these controls by abolishing the special areas and allowing potential advertisers to apply to local authorities for permission to erect hoardings.

Neil Sinden, national planning campaigner for CPRE, said that the present controls

are "one of the great achievements of post-war planning". He added: "The Government's proposals reveal an astonishing disregard for the great public support for strict control over advertising. One of CPRE's earliest successes was the removal of unsightly advertisements in rural Wales any intrusion has a serious impact. The uncluttered appearance of rural areas is a crucial component of people's enjoyment of

the qualities that make the countryside so special."

A spokesman for the Department of Environment said: "The present extra controls are largely obsolete and alternative controls are available to local authorities. The proposals will not result in a proliferation of posters in the countryside because local authorities have sufficient powers to prevent this."

Harrads was not to know who was behind this."

After the case, Mr Killen, of Finchley Park, north London, said: "This woman needs help not punishment. When I knew what was going on, I contacted Harrads and told them there was no plot and she had mental problems. For my trouble, I was thrown in prison for eight weeks and missed Christmas with my children."

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NICHOLAS
BROWN

Dunblane club run like Hitler Youth, says MP

The shadow Secretary of State for Scotland, George Robertson, yesterday told how he removed his young son from a boys' club run by Thomas Hamilton after becoming alarmed at its "Hitler Youth" image.

Mr Robertson told the Cullen inquiry into the Dunblane massacre of 16 pupils and their teacher how Hamilton later confronted him to seek an explanation - and how he sent him packing. So worried were Mr Robertson and other Dunblane parents about Hamilton's activities that they sought to have them curbed. And there was "absolute despair" on their part when Hamilton managed to secure a ruling by the ombudsman upholding his complaint about the council suspending his lettings, Mr Robertson said.

The MP for Hamilton, who lives in Dunblane and was giving evidence on the inquiry's 15th day, told how he raised his concern with the man who is now his chief political opponent, Michael Forsyth, the Secretary of State for Scotland and MP for Stirling. But Mr Forsyth's initial response was one of caution.

Mr Robertson told the inquiry how his son Malcolm, then aged 10, started attending one of Hamilton's clubs at Dunblane High School in 1983. But after going three or four times, the

boy missed one session - and Hamilton wrote a letter to him seeking an explanation. Mr Robertson's wife's response was: "How dare you write to my son? He is in the clubs, he goes to school, and a swimming club - and if he is absent, they don't write to him, they write to me."

With another parent, Mr Robertson went to a club session to see what was happening there - and was struck by the "military" atmosphere they saw as they watched, unnoticed, for about 10 minutes.

"I was struck very quickly by the bizarre nature of what was happening inside the gymnasium. There were large numbers of small boys in shorts being bossed around by two to three middle-aged men swaggering around in a very military type of way - a bit like the Hitler Youth, there was certainly a military element in that."

So alarmed was he and the other father that they decided to withdraw their sons immediately. Hamilton came to Mr Robertson's house the next day wanting to know his reasons for withdrawing his son - but Mr Robertson said he did not have to give him reasons.

After that, Mr Robertson and some other parents raised their concern that a club could be run by someone with no apparent qualifications and no



Labour MP George Robertson (left) told Michael Forsyth (right) about his concerns over Thomas Hamilton (centre)

RAC urges 'fine' for roadworks

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Transport Correspondent

Cable and utility companies should pay up to £5,000 a day for digging up roads and causing traffic congestion and delays, the RAC says.

The money could be used for improvements such as road and rail schemes, the RAC suggests in a discussion paper on funding transport. Under the 1991 Streetworks Act councils were given powers to impose penalties if contractors exceed the permitted timescale for streetworks, but the rules have never been implemented.

Edmund King, the RAC campaigns manager, said £5,000 a day was cheap for disruption in an urban area. He cited a recent example in central London where a cable company damaged gas mains in Rosebery Avenue and British Gas spent a month making the right part but then damaged a Thames Water sewer. "This caused delays in a large part of central London... It was a comedy of errors that

cost Londoners millions of pounds."

Recognising the limits on government spending, the RAC suggests two further ways of raising revenue for transport schemes. First, it suggests that a transport rate be levied on firms by a local authority, with the money being earmarked for specific transport projects.

The City of London Corporation has already put forward the idea of a voluntary extra rate in order to bring forward much needed improvements to the Tube and rail systems but so far has been stymied by opposition from the Treasury over the plan.

The RAC also suggests that the concept of "planning gain", whereby developers contribute to the costs of local infrastructure, should be extended to ensure big transport schemes are included, rather than just local roads and junctions.

Funding and managing the future of transport in the UK, RAC, 14 Cockspur Street, London SW1Y 5BL, £5.

DAILY POEM

Cotton Country

By Tony Connor
(for Larry Vona)

Over the disused railroad,
the abandoned brick hotel
and other desolations,
the moon climbs in full splendour
with Venus burning brightly
on the aftermath peacock-
and bleached-rose of March sunset.

There are gougings and rebuildings,
querulously beautiful.

The town's bronze soldier looks down,
pensive with old destruction,
old victory and defeat.

Fine cars with resounding names
are aimed at outer suburbs.

I walk to evening pleasures
in dark bars, where sad women
complain to one another
of marriage and sour love,
while men who seem to know them
play slow pool in the background.

Tony Connor was born in 1930 in Lancashire and left school at 14. He worked as a textile designer in Manchester until 1960 and in 1962 published the first of seven collections, *With Love* and *Somewhere*, which precipitated a change of career to the academic teaching of English. Since 1971 he has been Professor of English at Wesleyan University, Connecticut. Anvill next week will publish a new collection, *Metamorphic Adventures* (£8.95), from which this poem is taken.



Artful clean-up: Mannequins disposing of human figures cut from waste materials in Michael Landy's *Scrapheap Services* Installation at the Chisenhale Gallery in Bethnal Green, east London, where it can be seen (Wednesdays to Sundays) until 28 July. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

Is there hope after the BA and American Airlines "alliance"?

British Airways and American Airlines will try to maximise their profits by closer cooperation. Virgin Atlantic is right to be against it.

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- e) not issuing a ticket at all - being ticketless saves on administration costs.
- f) not participating in the costly computer reservation systems of the big airlines.
- g) selling directly to the customer cutting out the travel agents & their commission.
- h) not having complex and costly frequent flyer programmes.

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Russian elections: President boosts his second-round chances by sacking defence minister and recruiting popular general

Grachev fired as Yeltsin buys Lebed support

PHIL REEVES
Moscow

Boris Yeltsin moved swiftly to boost his re-election chances yesterday by firing his unpopular Defence Minister, Pavel Grachev, and handing two top posts to the man of the moment, Alexander Lebed.

The speed of the President's manoeuvre, only two days after narrowly winning the election's first round, adds to suspicions that the Kremlin covertly supported General Lebed's presidential campaign, in which he came third with a surprisingly high 11 million votes.

It was in the hope of netting those in the run-off that Mr Yeltsin yesterday appointed the 46-year-old retired general, a middle-of-the-road nationalist, as secretary of the Security Council and national security adviser. The scalp of the hapless General Grachev is likely to have been one of General Lebed's demands, as the two men hate each other.

Mr Yeltsin was keen to dispel the impression that the appointments were campaign tactics, insisting that General Lebed would have a key role in military reform and fighting crime. "This is not just an

appointment, it is a merger of two politicians, two programs," he said, standing next to General Lebed in the Kremlin.

Within hours of taking up the job, General Lebed was claiming credit for the first success in his drive to impose law and order, saying he had snuffed out an attempted coup within the military to resist General Grachev's sacking.

"People close to the [former] Defence Minister attempted to form GKChP Number three," he said, referring to a Russian acronym to the groups that organised the August 1991 attempted putsch and the conflict between parliament and the Kremlin in 1993.

"They raised a wave which went through the Moscow military district and the airborne troops. Full loyalty was displayed and I know for sure that there will be no disturbances."

Later, he toned down his claims, saying it had merely been an attempt to put pressure on the President.

General Lebed's appointment is a setback for Mr Yeltsin's challenger, the Communist leader, Gennady Zyuganov. He came second with 31.96 per cent to Mr Yeltsin's 35.02, according to preliminary figures.



Dream team: A smiling Mr Yeltsin (right) announces General Lebed's appointment as head of the Security Council

Photograph: AP

Although it is unclear what proportion of the Lebed vote will support the President in the second round, his appointment makes it no easier for the Communists to expand their vote of about 24 million. Mr Zyuganov made no secret of his disappointment over the Yeltsin-Lebed pact.

General Lebed will have no truck with the Communists: "I faced two ideas: an old one which caused much bloodshed and a new one which is being carried out very poorly, but to which the future belongs. I choose the new idea."

Yesterday's events look as if they were cooked up some time ago by Mr Yeltsin's campaign managers, after concluding that a strong performance by the general would damage the ultra-nationalist, Vladimir Zhirinovsky, and the Communists.

In the closing days before Sunday's ballot, glossy pro-Lebed television advertisements, made by specialists with close ties with the Kremlin, started to appear.

"There was a lot of official pressure on the banks not to give money to Grigory Yavlinsky [the leading liberal candidate]," said Sergei Markov, a political analyst with

the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "This did not apply to General Grachev."

General Lebed has ensured greater powers for his job as secretary of the Security Council, the main-policy making body which oversees the military and

the security services. He will be credited for having got rid of the hated General Grachev, who is widely blamed for the debacle of the Chechen war.

He also appears to be playing a leading role in choosing the sacked minister's replace-

ment. Although General Boris Gromov, a strong Yeltsin ally, is tipped for the job, it may remain in the hands of General Mikhail Kolesnikov, 56, chief of the Armed Forces General Staff, who was yesterday named acting Defence Minister.

But his warm relationship with Mr Yeltsin may prove short-lived. He has been given the brief to wipe out corruption. "I don't think he will follow the law," said Mr Markov. "He regards this as a real war against crime. I know there is a big pan-

ic right now among the mafia, because they know he wants to use troops against them."

This could lead to a conflict between the general and the shadier characters who surround the President.

Leading article, page 11

A bungling butcher who became a hate figure

HELEN WOMACK
Moscow

Yeltsin could have fired him from his post as Defence Minister a dozen times over. But he waited for the moment when sacrificing him would have the maximum political effect. That moment came yesterday.

General Grachev must have known the axe was about to fall. "Pavel Sergeyevich understands the President's decision," a Kremlin spokesman said. Russian television suggested he might be sent to Brussels as representative to Nato. There, he is known for having opposed air strikes on Bosnia and the eastern expansion of the Western alliance. At home, he is seen as a bungler and a hatcher.

General Grachev was regarded by army colleagues as a mediocrit whose rise in 1992 to become Defence Minister was surprising. "He was one of the lads. We used to send him out for vodka," said one officer who served with him in Afghanistan. In his photo album he has a picture of Grachev, then a junior officer, lolled half-naked under a tree.

But the Defence Minister became a hate figure following revelations of financial abuses while the army was pulling out of Germany, and the murder of one of the journalists who exposed the scandal.

Dmitri Khodolov, of *Moskovski Komsomolets*, had dug up so much dirt on how top officers enriched themselves by selling army supplies that a parliamentary enquiry had been scheduled. General Grachev then a junior officer, lolled half-naked under a tree.

The case contained a bomb which killed him. General Grachev denied involvement but Khodolov's outraged editor pointed the finger of blame directly at him.

Thousands of Russians turned out for Khodolov's funeral. President Yeltsin was expected to sack General Grachev but did not. It was assumed he gave him a second chance because of his dog-like loyalty. Mr Yeltsin was indebted to the minister for having supported him when the President sent tanks against his opponents in the White House in 1993.

Soon the tanks were to roll again, this time into Chechnya. General Grachev was among those who persuaded Mr

that should have been spent on housing returning Russian soldiers. Russians nicknamed the minister "Pasha" (the diminutive form of Pavel Mercedes.)

But the enquiry never took place. Khodolov was lured to a radio station by an anonymous phone call promising him a suitcase of documents.

The case contained a bomb which killed him. General Grachev denied involvement but Khodolov's outraged editor pointed the finger of blame directly at him.

Yeltsin in December 1994 that force was the only way to deal with the separatist rebellion.

"Give me a unit of paratroopers and we will sort out the Chechens in a couple of hours."

General Grachev was reported to have boasted.

The war against the rebels has now been going on for 18 months. 30,000 civilians have

been killed and the infrastructure of the region has been almost destroyed. Mr Grachev, indeed, has been only a liability to the Kremlin leader.

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SIGNIFICANT SHORTS

Hillary Clinton was accused of a "grave" abuse of power by the Republican majority on the Senate Watergate committee yesterday in covering up her involvement in the protracted controversy. But minority Democrats retorted that the report was a partisan and "despicable" attempt to smear the First Lady in an election year.

With much of the committee's 700-page report leaked, the final exchanges centred on the rediscovery of subpoenaed billing records of Mrs Clinton in the White House private quarters last January. Mrs Clinton had been the most likely person to put them there, the Republicans declared - a matter of "grave legal implication". However, the committee's ranking Democrat, Paul Sarbanes of Maryland, said that "having failed to tarnish the President, the Committee was on a massive witch-hunt against Mrs Clinton." *Rupert Cornwell - Washington*

Torture and human rights abuses in 146 countries last year were partly the fault of Western countries - including Britain, France and the US - who allow the export of instruments of torture, Amnesty International said. "Responsibility for human rights abuses does not lie only with those who pull the trigger or apply the electric shock," Pierre Sancet, the Secretary General, said, launching Amnesty's 1996 report. "It also lies with those who supply the weapons and training needed to use them." In the report, Amnesty singles out China, France, Germany, Russia, the UK and US as "trading in terror". *Christopher Bellamy*

Haiti's feared militia leader Emmanuel Constant, wanted for murder and torture, has been freed from jail in the US. Constant, 39, led the Front for the Advancement and Progress of Haiti (FRAPH), a group of armed thugs which terrorised the population with the blessing of the army. Its activities helped trigger the September 1994 intervention by US troops. After fleeing to the US in December 1994, Constant was arrested and was expected to be deported to Haiti for trial. *Phil Davison*

Latvia's president, Guntis Ulmanis, was re-elected for a second term by parliament, and vowed to continue a strong pro-Western foreign policy. Mr Ulmanis, seen as the candidate who would most guarantee internal political stability, gained 53 votes in the 100-seat parliament of the Baltic state. He said he would keep the country on track in efforts to get European Union (EU) and Nato entry. *Riga, Reuter*

Amass grave of 10,000 people killed by the Nazis in the Second World War has been found in Belarus, a defence ministry official said. The grave, in a ditch about 400 yards long, was discovered on the outskirts of Minsk. Many of the victims were Soviet Army soldiers, but there were also many civilians, including women and children. *Minsk*

Two black churches in Mississippi were destroyed by "suspicious" fires late on Monday, police said, adding to a wave of suspected arson attacks on churches that has swept the South of the United States. The 109-year-old Mount Pleasant Missionary Church and the Central Grove Church joined a list of 34 other black churches have been hit by fire over the past 18 months. *Reuter, Corinth, Mississippi*

The arms embargo against states of the former Yugoslavia has been terminated following an arms control agreement among them, the president of the UN Security Council announced. The embargo was imposed in September 1991 to curb fighting which erupted when Slovenia and Croatia declared independence. The Muslim-led government in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which declared independence in 1992, had long complained the embargo denied it the right to defend itself.



People's champion: Ms Suu Kyi, who is on a collision course with the generals

Photograph: Robert Moyer/Katz

Inside Burma: The democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi tells of her latest clash with the junta

Beacon of freedom bides her time

THOMAS CALEB
Rangoon

All his star charts and astrolabes failed to warn the official soothsayer used by Burma's generals if the horrendous gaffe he was about to commit.

Members of the ruling junta had gathered for the consecration of a Buddhist pagoda in Mandalay and the astrologer, Myaung, was down in a freshly dug hole, calculating the exact, auspicious moment when the foundation stone was to be laid. Finally, he called up to the generals: "Respected sirs, the time has come for you to leave your seats and step down."

As they rose decorously, a titter raced through the crowd. The Burmese have an ear for puns and Myaung's command was interpreted to have a double meaning: he was ordering the junta to resign and restore democracy. The generals were unmoved; Myaung was demoted and now peddles horoscopes. Whatever divinations he may now be making about the regime, he keeps it to himself.

It is not a matter he dares to share with foreign visitors. Yet in a country obsessed with horoscopes and numerology, talk in the Rangoon market-places of shifting planets over the next two months will usher in big political changes.

But instead of star-gazing, the Burmese have to glance no farther than down a certain street in Rangoon - University Avenue, home of the opposition leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Aung San Suu Kyi, to reach the same conclusion.

She and her pro-democracy supporters are on a collision course with the junta, known as the State Law and Order Restoration Council. Editorials in the military-run press vilify her as a "puppet princess" and "sorceress" unleashed against Burma by Britain. Many Burmese brush aside these accusations of Britain's colonial ambitions as ridiculous; they also find the slurs against Ms Suu Kyi to be repugnant.

At her rally last weekend, she cautioned some 6,000 supporters not to become angry over insults slung at her by the military brass.

She told the *Independent*:

"The Storc say that we are provocative but look at the articles that appear in their newspaper. It tells more about them than me." In the house beside the lake where she spent six years under house arrest, Ms Suu Kyi spoke of her latest showdown with Storc, which has passed a law that threatens her and her supporters with up to 20 years' jail for attending one of her pro-democracy rallies.

"We're flexible. May I suggest that Storc try some friendly persuasion with us instead of using the hammers," she suggested. More than 120 members of her National League for Democracy (NLD) have been under arrest since last month, when Ms Suu Kyi called a party congress to draw up a new constitution. It was after this "provocation" that Storc lashed back with draconian new laws.

"We're committed to preparing a draft constitution but we're down to earth. That means we don't have any intention of writing a constitution and shoving it down people's throats," she said. Pro-democracy activists want to reduce to military's sway over future civilian governments. Since her release from detention in July, the junta has snubbed Ms Suu Kyi, who realises that she could face re-arrest.

"It's a possibility. Maybe the Storc is just biding its time. But even if I'm arrested, we'll continue our work for democracy. These threats are nothing new to us," she added, laughing.

After seeing how many of her supporters defied the Storc's ban on her rallies, many Western observers in Rangoon predict that putting Ms Suu Kyi back in detention could lead to public unrest, which she opposes. She said: "I'd like to think that even without me, people would find a safe but effective way of carrying on our movement."

Many Rangoon diplomats claim that if the junta were to lock up the Nobel Peace Prize winner again, many countries which were willing to overlook the army's ugly traits - its widespread use of forced labour, its corruption and its human-rights violations - might withdraw their investment.

Since 1990, Burma's genera-

als have only managed to attract \$800m in investment, far less than their Asian neighbours.

Ms Suu Kyi has hesitated on calling for full-scale international sanctions against the Storc, since this would hurt the Burmese, who are among Asia's poorest people.

"When you look at our country, do not just see it as a land of economic possibilities ... Understand that we also want to live peacefully," Ms Suu Kyi explained to foreign business-

men recently. The economy is so mismanaged that even though Burma is one of the region's biggest rice producers, little boys at the Rangoon river docks trail after the stevedores, hoping to catch a few falling grains of rice from leaky sacks.

And now she says wistfully: "Maybe the Storc doesn't understand that they have nothing to lose in talking to us. But perhaps they're too attached in all their medals and other trappings."

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international

Netanyahu hits first crisis over cabinet line-up

ERIC SILVER

Jerusalem
Israel's new Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, broke all records last night by presenting his government to parliament only 18 days after his election was confirmed, but walked straight into a cabinet crisis.

Two of Mr Netanyahu's Likud party heavyweights, the former defence minister, Ariel Sharon, and the former foreign minister, David Levy, were absent from the initial cabinet list and boycotted the session of the Knesset.

Mr Levy had been offered his old post at the foreign ministry, but threw MP's into disarray by refusing to accept the post until the Prime Minister allocates Mr Sharon a senior portfolio. Later, Mr Levy said that Mr Sharon would be offered a specially created portfolio, as minister of the national infrastructure.

Mr Netanyahu is keeping the foreign ministry open for Mr Levy, whose Gesher splinter group holds seven of Likud's 32 Knesset seats. The Prime Minister will act for the time being as Foreign Minister.

Limon Livnat, the only woman on Mr Netanyahu's team (as Communications Minister), predicted the crisis would be short-lived. But Mr Levy and Mr Sharon have a long record of sticking thorns into the sides of their own leaders. Mr Levy has old scores to settle from the days when Mr Netanyahu, as his insubordinate deputy, coaxed him to undermine his authority as foreign minister.

Mr Sharon's original omission from the top cabinet ranks ("unthinkable", in Mr Levy's words) was clumsy and ungracious. It was the hurly old warrior who persuaded Mr Levy and another right-wing maverick, Rafael Eitan, to withdraw from the prime ministerial race, leaving Mr Netanyahu a clear run against Labour's Shimon Peres. Mr Sharon also brokered the deal that won the Likud candidate the crucial

ultra-Orthodox vote. Building a coalition of six right-wing, religious, ethnic and centrist parties proved a crash course in the realities of Israeli politics for the 46-year-old Mr Netanyahu who had never been more than a deputy minister. He learned the hard way that even a prime minister cannot rule as he pleases.

The coalition parties, including his own Likud, still have their separate aspirations,

The Netanyahu government said it undertook to "negotiate with the Palestinian Authority, with the intent of reaching a permanent arrangement, on the condition that the Palestinians fulfil all their commitments fully." This gives Mr Netanyahu an escape hatch if he does not like the way the negotiations are leading, as neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians have fulfilled all their commitments.

But, Mr Netanyahu rules out a Palestinian state, or a Jordanian-Palestinian federation. He is offering the Palestinians only "an arrangement whereby they will be able to conduct their lives freely within the framework of self-government".

The new government also rejects a "right of return" of Arab populations to any part of the Land of Israel west of the Jordan river". This condemns hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees outside the West Bank and Gaza to permanent exile. On Jerusalem, Mr Netanyahu asserts that the city will "remain forever under Israel's sovereignty".

The guidelines make no mention of Hebron, the last West Bank town under Israeli occupation, which Israel was supposed to evacuate in March. However, they talk of strengthening and retaining Jewish settlements on the West Bank.

Once he was denied Defence, Mr Sharon demanded Finance, another China shop which Mr Netanyahu was determined to exclude from him. The job went to Dan Meridor, the former justice minister.

In his inaugural speech last night, Mr Netanyahu pledged to continue the search for peace with Israel's neighbours. He appealed to the leaders of

Syria, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia to negotiate without conditions. But the new government's manifesto was constructed by the Palestinians and the Syrians. Mahmoud Abbas, the chief Palestinian negotiator in talks on the final status of the West Bank and Gaza, said Mr Netanyahu's positions "contradict the spirit of peace." They were, he said, "uncompromising and stubborn".

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interests and constituencies. If the Prime Minister wants to get his legislative programme through and win a second term four years down the line, he has to satisfy their competing demands.

Mr Netanyahu chose Yitzhak Mordechai, another former general, as Defence Minister. The stolid and popular Mr Mordechai is a political novice. Unlike Mr Sharon, the architect of the disastrous 1982 invasion of Lebanon, he can be relied on not to make waves.

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Arabs and the men: Sudanese army volunteers on weapons training in the desert outside Khartoum

Asmara - Sudan's Islamic fundamentalist government could fall within the next two to three weeks, according to the country's main opposition grouping, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

The overthrow of the Khartoum regime, said the NDA, would be precipitated by an intifada (uprising), accompanied by the mutiny of a large part of the Sudanese armed forces.

The regime of President Omar Hassan al-Bashir could have collapsed by the middle of next month, they say.

These predictions follow

last week's issuing of an NDA ultimatum to the government to step down peacefully. The NDA's members include the two leading opposition parties, the Umma (Nation) Party and the Democratic Unionist Party, as well as the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

which has been fighting the forceful imposition of Islam on the southern part of the country since 1983.

"We plan to ignite a popular uprising in a dozen towns and cities across northern Sudan," said Omar Nureldayem, secretary of the Umma Party and a former finance minister. "We don't expect a government capitulation but we do believe there will be military support for the uprising."

Dissatisfaction has been growing with the military junta of General Bashir, which is inspired by the National Islamic Front (NIF) of the ideologue Hassan al-Turabi. The costly effects of the war, human rights abuses and crippling price rises have caused hardship and suffering in the Arab north.

From abroad, there has been mounting criticism of Khartoum, which is accused of sponsoring international terrorism. In April the United Nations imposed diplomatic and travel sanctions on Khartoum for its failure to hand over suspects wanted in connection with last year's attempted assassination of the Egyptian President, Hosni Mubarak.

"The time is now ripe for an uprising in Sudan," said Dr Nureldayem who, with other

members of the NDA's opposition-in-exile, is based in Asmara.

"There will be casualties - perhaps a few thousand people will die. But the intervention of the army would considerably reduce the bloodshed."

Protests against price rises, in the past largely restricted to the Sudanese capital, have been brutally suppressed by the Khartoum government. The NDA predicts that recent increases in the price of fuel and other commodities will impel large sections of the populace to take to the streets in a show of discontent in coming weeks.

"It is our intention that the Khartoum regime be overthrown from inside Sudan," said General Fathi Ali, a former commander of the Sudanese navy and now military head of the NDA based in Asmara.

"We expect the NIF government will try to suppress the planned demonstrations. But more than 90 per cent of the Sudanese army is on our side and there will be a mutiny if the government uses force. The uprising will take several days to build up. Within a week or two we will have secured the overthrow of the regime."

General Ali, a graduate of Camberley army staff college,

said he could muster a "small but capable armed force" to advance on Khartoum from the Eritrean border region.

Eritrea broke diplomatic relations with Sudan a year and a half ago over Khartoum's support of Eritrean Jihad, a small but potentially destabilising force of exiled Eritreans committed to the overthrow of the secular government of President Isaias Afewerki. Since then Eritrea has been providing military training to the Sudanese opposition at bases in western Eritrea.

"The Sudanese allied forces can be sought in their hundreds," said a Western diplomat in Asmara. "There are guerrilla bands operating out of a number of bases inside Eritrea. Militarily, they're like mosquito bites but psychologically they're very important. The opposition has the potential to seriously harass Khartoum. It has forced the Sudanese army to move resources from southern Sudan and deploy significant units in the north-eastern region."

The Eritreans, who recently celebrated the fifth anniversary of their successful struggle for independence from Ethiopia, are regarded as having produced one of the most

capable guerrilla forces in African history. The insurgents of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, who now form the ruling Eritrean Party for Democracy and Justice, were backed by Khartoum during their secessionist war.

Like other countries in the region, Eritrea has been unable to dissuade Khartoum from attempts to export Islamic fundamentalism beyond its borders. In recent months there has been an increase in Eritrean Jihad raids into Eritrea from Sudan and the two countries' border region is described as extremely tense. Ethiopia and Uganda have also accused Khartoum of destabilisation by mounting cross-border raids into their territories.

Whilst Ethiopia and Uganda have been circumspect in their support of the Sudanese armed opposition, particularly of the SPLA, Eritrea has made no secret of backing anti-Khartoum elements. The NDA operates openly from the former Sudanese embassy in Asmara.

"We realise there is no possibility of making Khartoum change its mind," said the Eritrean Foreign Minister, Petros Solomon. "It has shown a very clear intention to destroy our government. We have no alternative but to resist and help the alternative Sudanese political parties press for a change in Khartoum."

Sudan 'faces mutiny and revolt'

The main opposition group claims the Islamic-backed regime could be ousted by next month, writes David Orr

which has been fighting the forceful imposition of Islam on the southern part of the country since 1983.

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Russia's opportunity for democratic reform

Western governments are understandably relieved at the results of last Sunday's presidential election in Russia. Although nothing can be taken for granted, President Boris Yeltsin seems likely to see off his Communist challenger, Gennady Zyuganov, in the second round of voting in early July.

Mr Zyuganov's nostalgia for the Soviet Union, his past involvement in hardline Communist and Russian nationalist causes and his obvious lack of enthusiasm for private enterprise would make him, from a Western point of view, a less suitable occupant of the presidency than Mr Yeltsin, the devil we know and, as often as not, get on with. If it should turn out that Russian voters share this assessment, that would be a welcome sign of maturity from an electorate that received its first taste of free political choice only seven years ago.

There were other positive features to Sunday's elections. Although a strong pro-Yeltsin bias in the state-run media marred the campaign, the voting and ballot-counting went smoothly and fairly. This was a big improvement on the parliamentary elections and constitutional referendum of December 1993, when extensive ballot-rigging probably took place.

Also on the plus side was the poor performance of Vladimir Zhirinovsky, the foul-mouthed extreme nationalist

who came fifth with less than 6 per cent of the vote. It remains disturbing that more than four million Russians thought that he should be made one of the most powerful men on earth, but at least this particular dog seems to have had his day.

Finally, it may be no bad thing that the election has created an overnight political star in the shape of Alexander Lebed. A retired army general who is little known in the West, he was appointed yesterday as Mr Yeltsin's top national security adviser and secretary of the powerful presidential Security Council. He quickly made it clear that he viewed his responsibilities as covering not just defence, foreign affairs and internal security, but economic policy areas such as privatisation and the problem of capital flight.

It is hard to avoid the conclusion, from that weighty agglomeration of portfolios, that Mr Lebed has just become the second most powerful man in Russia. No doubt the president's loyal Prime Minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, would disagree. But Mr Lebed now has a proven base of electoral support – more than 10 million votes – whereas Mr Chernomyrdin was humiliated in last December's parliamentary elections. Mr Yeltsin even hinted yesterday that he regarded Mr Lebed as a suitable successor as president. That is not surprising, given Mr Lebed's age (he is only 46), his status

as Russia's most popular general, and the similarities between the two men's political views and instincts.

As the pivotal figure in a second Yeltsin term, Mr Lebed should have much to contribute. His main difference with Mr Yeltsin is over Chechnya: he has been one of Russia's most outspoken critics of the botched military crackdown. With the intransigent Pavel Grachev kicked out yesterday as defence minister, that provides grounds for hoping that the Chechen war will be brought to a swift conclusion – and not before time.

Like Mr Yeltsin, and unlike Mr

Zyuganov, Mr Lebed does not suffer from nostalgia for the Soviet command economy. Though a soldier rather than an economist, he recognises the virtues of the free market and would broadly support Mr Yeltsin's reforms. With continued help from Western financial institutions, there is no reason why Russia's transformation into a successful market economy should not be complete by 2000.

Mr Lebed will also want to clamp down on tax evasion, racketeering and other forms of illegal self-enrichment by Russia's new classes of businessmen and gangsters. Many Russians would

argue that it is high time the government got to grips with this problem. But the political temperature will zoom up in Moscow if Mr Lebed investigates the privatisation of some of Russia's biggest state companies and confirms the truth of rumours that there is corruption in high places.

The main problem thrown up by the election and its immediate fall-out lies in the impact on Russia's political system. If Russia can be considered a constitutional democracy, it is an imperfect one with authoritarian features. By giving a man of Mr Lebed's immense, if suddenly acquired, political weight the job of steering the Security Council, Mr Yeltsin is strengthening an institution over which parliament and the courts have no oversight.

The council's far-reaching powers and lack of accountability go a long way to explaining why the Russian intervention in Chechnya has so badly blundered. Perhaps Mr Lebed can help to correct the Chechnya mistakes, but the heart of the problem will remain: parliament and the law are too weak in relation to secretive presidential organs of authority. Matters are made worse by Mr Yeltsin's propensity to take political advice from insiders such as his personal bodyguard, Alexander Korzhakov, as much as from his government ministers.

If Mr Yeltsin defeats Mr Zyuganov

by a convincing margin, he would have an opportunity to democratise Russia's political institutions. To judge from his recent record, however, it seems doubtful that he will choose this path. That will be a missed opportunity, because we need a more democratic Russia as much as the Russians do.

In defence of the national dish

David Blunkett is troubled by E-numbers and B-numbers. Minimum nutritional standards are essential, he insists, to tempt children back from the chip shop and into the hall ter their daily school dinner.

Has he tried a school meal lately? Lack of nutrition is the least of it. Far worse is the daily abuse of innocent palates. At least the soggy swede and cabbage doled out by Mrs Wham-on were rich enough in taste to be genuinely revolting. Today's chill-cooked offerings are more bland than the packaging they arrive in. They are a gastronomic insult.

Far better that the next generation's gourmets lunch on our most celebrated national dish: fresh fish (that brain-food!) swiftly fried alongside slivers of potato (that vitamin C!), all heavily seasoned to taste.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sabotage of Britain's role in Europe

Sir: As an Englishman and a European I have never felt so profoundly ashamed.

In his Iron Curtain speech Winston Churchill was honest enough to explain that European unity was an excellent thing for the Continent, but that Britain would applaud from the sidelines.

When the Council of Europe began operating in 1949, Ernest Bevin and the Foreign Office saw to it that member governments gave it no real teeth. This policy was pursued consistently by HMG throughout the Fifties and Sixties. When in opposition, authentic Europeans such as Harold Macmillan or Roy Jenkins spoke up convincingly in the Parliamentary Assembly in Strasbourg, but as soon as they assumed governmental responsibility they relapsed into Foreign Office negativity, or even tried to sabotage the emerging European Community. Only Ted Heath showed himself to be a loyal European while at the top.

Finally, Britain understood that her sheer self-interest made it inescapable for her to join the club. But the spirit of sabotage continued to lurk, culminating in the series of disasters of the Thatcher regime.

Now we have incontrovertible proof of the cynical contempt with which her Government betrayed the trust of the peoples of the Continent in 1988, selling off poisoned goods under false pretences.

Not since the Belgrano went down have I felt so difficult to look my neighbours here in the face.

JOHN PRIESTMAN
Strasbourg

The writer was clerk of the Parliamentary Assembly from 1971-1986

Sir: John Major has been widely and rightly commended for his condemnation of two of his junior colleagues for threatening to withhold their support across the "Parliamentary board" in pursuance of a single political object dear to their hearts ("Pork-barrel politics come to Britain", 14 June).

Jacques Santer could surely be forgiven for strongly complaining about HMG holding up the progress of all new business until we get what we want, on a single issue of great importance to us – a solution of the beef crisis.

SIR FREDERIC BENNETT
Machynlleth, Powys

Pleasures of parenthood

Sir: At the time when I became a father 25 years ago, I felt very much as Fran Abrams does ("My nest is empty, and I love it", 15 June). I was not sure I wanted the responsibility of children and only concurred because my wife was so anxious to have a family. With hindsight, I am glad that her wiser counsel prevailed.

Kids bleed you of money and emotion and force you to spend countless hours watching their antics on football, hockey and cricket pitches, or at the edge of show-jumping arenas. I would not have missed a second of it. Parenthood has been arduous but tremendous fun.



My Dad's done more to break down the class system than your Dad!

Ms Abrams made her choice and I made mine – and we are both happy with the outcome. I take issue, however, with her assumption that childbirth has been promoted to keep women in their place and to ensure the care of parents in their old age.

Parenthood can also keep fathers in their place. But most importantly, she assumes that, because she has always been financially self-sufficient, she will not be a burden to any children in her old age. No matter what provision she has made for her retirement, the wealth to service it has got to be generated within the continuing workings of society – that is, by my children and their peers.

CHRIS MOWBRAY
Tibberon,
Worcestershire

Sir: Fran Abrams is right. Children are expensive and prevent one from doing your own thing (for a short time relative to one's whole life). I respect her decision not to have children.

However, while sitting outside with my two children, eating pizzas before bedtime, and listening to my nine-year-old telling a subversive and lataatorial version of the Goldilocks story to amuse her six-year-old brother, it struck me, not for the first time, that children bring an extra dimension to one's existence, and provide a very necessary foil to our overworking, concerns with our careers and ourselves. If Ms Abrams doesn't want to have children then she shouldn't have any. But she is missing out.

ANNE COBLEY
Cheltenham,
Gloucestershire

Base MPs' pay on productivity

Sir: You support a 30 per cent pay increase for MPs (leading article, 18 June). Later this week I shall be trying to persuade university academics to accept a pay increase which, for the second year running, will be one per cent below the inflation of retail prices. These academics are intelligent people; they will think a salary of £45,000 for an MP is not outrageous.

However, they will not understand why you do not call for an increase in productivity in the form of a 30 per cent cut in the number of MPs. Over several years Parliament has supported the imposition of "efficiency gains" on the public sector so that more has to be done for less. We are all entitled to see MPs gagging and spluttering in the attempt to swallow their own medicine.

S P ROUSE
Chief Executive
Universities and Colleges
Employers Association
London W1

Branson against the oligopolists

Sir: Professor Dogans' time as chairman of state-owned and subsidised Olympic Airways appears to have done little to improve his understanding of the importance of competition in air transport and the need to protect the interests of consumers (Letters, 18 June).

He professes not to comprehend the difference between the proposed merger between British Airways and American Airlines and the co-operative agreement signed in 1994 between Virgin Atlantic and Delta Airways, and accuses me of crying foul because someone has put together a bigger alliance than ours.

One obvious difference is that BA is, by its own admission, the largest international scheduled airline in the world. It will be merging with the world's second largest international and domestic airline. Together they will control over 60 per cent of air traffic between the UK and US, and even higher shares on some individual routes. How can anyone seriously compare the impact on competition and consumer choice of such a merger with any deal involving Virgin Atlantic?

The second important difference is that our arrangement with Delta was not a merger. We sell blocks of seats to Delta, who then compete with us in the marketplace. We are not allowed to collude on prices and unlike BA and American we have not sought exemption from the competition laws in Europe or the US to do so.

When approving the Virgin Atlantic/Delta alliance both the UK and US governments recognised that it would increase competition on the North Atlantic, not reduce it. I challenge anyone to prove that this same is true for the BA/American merger.

RICHARD BRANSON
Chairman
Virgin Group of Companies
London W8

After divorce, fault lives on

Sir: Whatever Polly Toynbee's opinion (17 June), fault in divorce is not a "concept" that can be killed off by legislation. All too often it is a tragic fact. Of course, there are (perhaps many) cases in which a fictional fault is invented to speed up legal proceedings. There is no reason why these should not instead end in no-fault divorce acknowledging that the marriage died on its feet out of nothing worse than neglect. But there are also (far too many) cases in which an innocent party falls victim to very real physical or emotional violence. It helps no one except the perpetrator of this violence to dissolve such marriages in the same way.

Once divorce has ended the marriage, life goes on. Both parties will probably enter into new relationships. Despite previous hurts, they may remarry. To have a chance of thriving, those future relationships will have to be built on a candid acknowledgement of what went before. A person who has been battered and betrayed needs to have that past known and allowance made for it. Someone who has used a previous relationship as an opportunity to brutalise and belittle should not be left free to inflict the same undeserved punishment on another unsuspecting partner.

The Rev TONY WHIPP
Whitehaven,
Cumbria

Honest broker for Ulster

Sir: As an American professor of politics and for 20 years a resident of the home town of George Mitchell [chairman of the peace talks on Northern Ireland], I have followed his career closely since before he went to Washington ("Revealed: the 'Irish-American' senator who is as Irish as a stuffed vine leaf", 17 June). Three comments might be of interest.

First, whilst his father was Irish and Catholic, his mother was Lebanese, and that Maronite tradition was a far more important part of his upbringing. Second, he has always been reasonably close to the Kennedys – most New England Democrats are. But those like him have little to do with their stands on things Irish (as odd as that might seem to British readers) and reflect, instead, shared views on at least a dozen other issues. Finally, while no one would ever claim that George Mitchell has one of the great creative minds of the 20th century, he is a remarkably fair and honest man who excels at forging coalitions amongst disagreeing politicians. If a "third party" could help the peace process, few people would be better suited to it.

CHARLES HAUSS
Lower Shipake, Oxfordshire

Single service

Sir: As an alternative to Dr Norman Tanner's suggestion (Letters, 17 June), what about introducing the real double fault: a serve that was both wide and long would not qualify for a second attempt.

HARVEY R COLE
Winchester

The horrors of getting a visa in Moscow

Sir: Further to the article "Russian fans cry foul at visa chaos" (12 June) and the letter "UK snubs Russians" (15 June), my daughter, who is teaching in Moscow for part of her gap year before going to university, has had recent experience of trying to obtain a visa for a Russian friend.

She writes: "At 7am tomorrow I am meeting Marsha at the embassy to try and get to the front of the queue for British visas, which stretches round the block. It opens at 9am. The visa section is horrible – just queues of desperate people, and the odd board stuck to the front of the building with glittering photos of the interior of Buckingham Palace (as if we all live like that), Big Ben and the Thames at sunset, etc.

Later in the same letter she writes: "Muddy afternoon. Over 100 people were already there. They let in six people every three-quarters of an hour. In the end I jumped over the barricade with Marsha following and forced my way in with the aid of my passport and angry words. Many people had been queuing since Friday evening, and so there was a lot of shouting, particularly as no one paid attention to who had got there first."

"Once inside we had to queue for ages to fill in forms, then found out that we didn't have enough roubles to pay for the visa application (regardless of whether you get one or not). Luckily, I found an English woman who gave us the money in exchange for my cheque. Then we had to wait again to be interviewed. By this time it was 12.30.

"Eventually we were called up. The interviewer [English] was incredibly rude to us, ignored me, and just said 'Your mother lives in England, I'll have to send you for a more detailed interview on Thursday afternoon.'

My recent visa to Russia cost £10 and was arranged by post. I understand the charge made for a visa at the British embassy in Moscow is the equivalent of £30.

ANTHONY FURNESS
London NW

Found: men who do visit their GP

Sir: General practice remuneration is a bizarre system, and in fact if 60 per cent of men are unregistered and register this year the effect will not be to give us increased income with which to treat the increased numbers (Letters, 14 and 17 June). What would actually happen would be that the Government would note the following year that the health service had paid more to GPs than it had planned, and reduce fees to reclaim the money in the following year.

However, the balance of male and female patients in my practice, and in those others I know of, is sufficiently close to 50:50 that the idea of a large unregistered and unregistered pool of men seems highly unlikely. Most of them rely on their wives or mothers to remember the name of their doctor for them and indeed have commonly been registered along with the rest of the family.

Dr A K MIDGLEY
Exeter

essay

Untangling marriage

After all the moral handwringing, divorce will be a different affair now the Commons has passed the Family Law Bill. Patricia Wynn Davies talks to a couple who have tried the changes Parliament thinks will help troubled relationships

Jeremy and Helen really tried to save their marriage. It was not the snap, throwaway decision that many imagine divorce involves. It was a slow, painstaking and painful process that took years, not weeks or months.

They have been through all the processes that Lord Mackay's Family Law Bill advocates for many thousands of others contemplating a break-up. They had marriage guidance, counselling, plenty of it, they went through mediation, they came to grief at the hands of lawyers, they emerged at the end with a fierce resolve to do no more damage to their children. The story of Helen and Jeremy spotlights the reality of what future divorcing couples might face.

"We had a lot of marriage guidance counselling," says Helen. "We had exhausted all the avenues." Eventually, after 15 years of marriage, they reached a joint decision that it had, to quote the existing law and the new, irretrievably broken down.

"It wasn't as though we were constantly fighting," said Jeremy. "We decided together 'We can't make it work now.'"

They had been to Relate and gone through a series of counselling sessions. There is a three-month "quarantine" period in the Bill in which couples can explore counselling but must desist from getting on with anything else to do with the divorce — the next best thing to being given compulsorily marriage guidance. But, as this couple's experience shows, many people have already explored the marriage guidance avenue long before they seek a divorce. Thus, say some critics, the three-month "stand-off" period may prove to be counter-productive, perhaps even damaging to families where children desperately need a new settled way of life.

Jeremy and Helen, who had tried counselling at a much earlier stage in their marriage, are proof that some couples do

try very hard to save their marriages. But trying to become reconciled is as much as can be expected, and no amount of protracted discussion by policy-makers, still less party politicians, will ever alter that.

In Helen and Jeremy's case, nobody else was involved. The root of the problem lay in a lack of communication, exacerbated by Jeremy's refusal to go back to a full-time salaried job in medicine. After a business venture failed, leaving the family with huge debts, he combined work as a locum with a consultancy for international companies.

"We never learnt to communicate through disagreement," he says now.

Their decision finally to split up had been gestating over a period of years — not at the breakneck speed some MPs appear to consider is the norm — but none the less they ended up getting a divorce on the grounds of unreasonable behaviour. They got their decree absolute a few days ago.

They had begun by consulting a lawyer friend, who advised them that this was the quickest way to bring about a conclusion to a long-drawn-out and painful process. Under the existing law, the alternative would have been to separate for two years. Under the new Bill, because their children are under 16, they would have to wait 18 months, three months for "reconciliation" and a further 15-month period of "reflection and consideration".

Their decision, once it had been reached, to get it over with the sort of experience that has prompted some family lawyers to warn that the 18-month cooling off period required by the Bill could have the opposite effect to the one intended, with people jumping to the counselling-waiting-mediation-divorce rollercoaster at an earlier stage than they might otherwise have done.

As it was, someone had to present the petition, which Helen duly complied through



PRIESTLEY

the lawyer. "I would rather not have had to apportion blame. It is a sordid business. And when you list the items, they sound incredibly petty. There is no way that anybody from outside can judge."

The lawyer friend, she adds, had emphasised that it was, frankly, irrelevant whether the finger of blame was pointed at her or at Jeremy. "I glanced at the petition once," says Jeremy. There was never any question of a counter-claim of competing allegations. That this fiction is now to be removed from the law — by the introduction of "no

fault" divorce — was and remains, despite the political machinations, a fundamental plank of the Bill.

The more pressing question is none the less whether the Bill can live up to claims that the mediation (resolution through a trained third party) of disputes, rather than resorting to an acrimonious exchange of solicitors' letters and, worse, court hearings and court orders, will convert some of the hostility and bitterness into constructive discussion about the future.

There is no compulsion as such to use mediation, although a growing number of couples are doing so even under existing law. Mediation might also persuade a few more couples to stick together, and it does help to prevent divorce being so acrimonious.

Nobody, however, should imagine that the process can somehow be anxiety-free. Jeremy and Helen had been to marriage guidance, but all the old feelings of sadness and disappointment still came flooding back. Helen recalls feeling emotionally overwhelmed on their first meeting with a medi-

ator. "It was because of this recognition that things had broken down irretrievably," she says. But she feels mediation — the couple had a series of sessions while they were still living together in the same house — was the key to handling the really difficult issues, such as telling the children, who are now aged nine and seven.

"We did not have very many friends who were divorced. We

in reaching agreement about caring for the children. Helen, a junior school teacher, has primary care. The children stay with Jeremy one night a week and on alternate weekends, while their parents babysit for each other on evenings out.

"Helen would like me to see more of them. But we consult our diaries at the beginning of each month and try to work it out," says Jeremy, as he gives

sorting out the finances took a him for the worse when solicitors became involved. The hostility and distrust that he felt they had managed to keep under control was reintroduced.

He feels the outline agree-

ment that had been reached during mediation was unstickied in the nine months after Helen sought legal advice. The issue was the familiar one of the extent of Jeremy's earnings as a self-employed person.

Helen conceded that it is this episode that has left Jeremy feeling particularly raw. "I know he feels a great deal more negative about that than I do," she says.

For her part, she was grap-

pling with the dilemma of signing an agreement at a time when trust and respect had gone. But, she emphasises: "The mediators were very clear that I needed to seek legal advice because it wasn't straightforward."

Jeremy believes that she saw a solicitor too soon. While the mediation sessions came to £500, he spent a further £1,500 in solicitors' fees.

Eventually, the "clean break" was achieved — Helen

got the house and maintenance

for the children and no further call on Jeremy's assets for herself. They are resolved to avoid unhappiness for their children at all costs. But the tussle over the financial settlement left Jeremy sourred. "The family is several thousand pounds the poorer," he says.

The Bill is in a sense unique in the way that it promotes the institution of marriage while also trying to make the best fit it can of divorce. So do Helen and Jeremy, at the end of a lengthy period of counselling, mediation and then divorce, still, as Lord Mackay would like, believe in marriage?

Neither seems in any doubt about still supporting marriage and both, cautiously, hope to marry again — but better prepared than last time, when they were 23 and 24. They are older and wiser.

Says Helen: "I am still convinced that marriage is a worthwhile thing. There are couples who are happier together in 15 or 18 years than when they first married. I was very happy within my parents' marriage. For me it's still an ideal. There needs to be more help before marriage. Lack of communication was our big problem. I think we had very high expectations of one another."

Helen and Jeremy are a couple who tried hard a million miles removed from the divorce-at-will stereotype portrayed by so many MPs, some of them divorcees, during the passage of the Bill. The new legislation has taken no chances by ensuring that most divorces will take longer to accomplish and that it will be much more difficult to embark on a second marriage without dealing properly with the aftermath of the first.

There will be lots more information (information sessions are the only mandatory aspect) and much more forceful reminders of parents' responsibilities for the welfare and feelings of their children, perhaps a lot more counselling and probably a lot more mediation, with often good and sometimes not so good results.

But when breakdown comes for the many who are just like Jeremy and Helen, to dispute whether the new law makes divorce "harder" or "easier" is to miss the point. The truth is that ending a marriage is difficult and daunting, not neat and tidy and mechanistic. The Bill has pitfalls, but at least the law has matured enough to reconcile a belief in marriage with today's social realities.

Some of the names in this article have been changed.

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Gross % Gross CAR %

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Pepys doesn't know what he's missing

Dear RUDEE," writes Maguy Higgs. "Your breeze to let the readers do the writing while the 'writer' cashes the cheque deserves top marks for something. Choose: ingenuity ... cheek ... efficiency ... the reader-feel-good factor." Good grief, woman, has it completely escaped your attention that the workers who get paid most are those who delegate? I sit here listening to the merry hum of my fax machine and making crucial decisions about what emerges. I am editor and managing director of this column: I only wish the cheque reflected my importance.

"She was only a sausage-makker's daughter has inspired Mike Bradshaw to: 'But she curst every wurst that she hurst' and John Hobson to: 'But she knew her Long Johns from her Franks.'

"She was a crime novelist about a fox-hunting bill, I had to bone up on hunt diaries that made Eliza seem Pepys-like by comparison. I still keep instruc-

tions from an Edwardian autobiography. In it should be noted the hounds he hunts with, the meets he attends, the distance to them, the weather, the directions of the wind, a concise account of the day's sport, and any noteworthy incident in it ... does not the soldier's art consist of order, simplicity and clearness?"

Quite. The visual bit is OK, if you fancy a metaphor in the shape of a vast wooden-slatted pyramid housing baby pine trees, but what really grabbed my attention was Ms Marshall's diary of her preg-

nancy — complete with doctor's commentary. Now I'm well-up on boring diaries.

When writing the history of *The Economist* I had to skim 60 years of the fantastically dull journal of one Eliza Bagshot, daughter of the paper's founder and wife of Walter, the third editor. A typical entry read: "Got up 2 seconds 9 months", for, as the artist, Maria Marshall, explains, "An ejaculation of 2 seconds is sufficient to provide enough sperm to fertilise an egg; 9 months is self-explanatory."

Then last year, when I wrote a crime novel about a fox-hunting bill, I had to bone up on hunt diaries that made Eliza seem Pepys-like by comparison. I still keep instruc-

tions from an Edwardian auto-biography. In it should be noted the hounds he hunts with, the meets he attends, the distance to them, the weather, the directions of the wind, a concise account of the day's sport, and any noteworthy incident in it ... does not the soldier's art consist of order, simplicity and clearness?"

So does Ms Marshall's. And though more selective than the Antipodean who was in the news recently for keeping a record of every single event in his life, from the few pages I could see she appears to omit no detail, however slight, relating to her pregnancy. Where she goes further than Eliza, banty diarists' for the Antipodean is in selling it for £350 plus VAT in a limited edition of 29.

I proceeded to the ICA and found Chapmanworld, an exhibition consisting mainly of pairs of child-like mannequins fused together in interesting places and naked except for their trainers. Upstairs a skeleton mannequin suspended from the

ceiling dripped copious amounts of red fluid into a bucket; on the wall was a notice disclaiming responsibility for damage caused to clothing by splashes of blood.

I did not sign up for the workshop, exploring through discussion and practical experiment the Chapman use of distorted focus. OK, OK, so I'm bourgeois.

Improbability of the week: A marathon reading of *Olysses* on Sunday at the James Joyce Centre in Dublin was kicked off by Jeffrey Archer. Which leads me neatly into the ICA poster of the day with its Molly Bloom overtones. Jacky Fleming draws one woman saying to another: "then he said why was I always trying to CHANGE him and I said probably because he's such an obnoxious thoughtless selfish overbearing self-righteous hypocritical arrogant loud-mouthed misogynist bastard."

My fax number is 0181 932 4629 — not 4629.

Miles Kington is back next week.

Fischer ma

مكتبة الراحل

the commentators

Shreds of hope remain among the shards of glass

So was it wrong to give Gerry Adams the benefit of so many doubts? Does it turn out that, in the end, the wolfish smile and tweed jackets were only light disguise for the wolfman of West Belfast? Once IRA, always IRA? Are those who always mocked the peace process as a republican fraud to be congratulated? And are the peacemakers to be cursed as naive?

Five question-marks in the first paragraph is going it a bit - but feels about right for this week. In London and Belfast, the mood among the politicians I talked to yesterday is desperately darker than at any time since the original ceasefire. There are warnings of carnage to come and political seizure. In Washington and Dublin, many of those who feted Gerry Adams feel sick and betrayed - and, no doubt, more than a little foolish.

And certainly, if you deal with the IRA, you are playing a dangerous game. It may be that there are people in its army council who truly believe that they can continue the peace process with a little judicious

The push for peace came from within Northern Ireland, and we owe it to them to keep going

bombing - murder the odd Asian shopkeeper in Canary Wharf if you think London ministers are dragging their heels; strew devastation across central Manchester when Adams is excluded from the talks. And so on.

There will be so-called strategists who think that all-party talks can be kick-started, or rather, bomb-started. And after that, when there is a little trouble with the chairman of the sub-committee on electoral systems, or whatever, they can always kill some Liverpoolian committee, or maim a granny in Bristol, to jolly things along.

This black comedy of a political strategy was, no doubt, given some sustenance by the decision to forge ahead with talks after the first London bombings. But somehow, a second round of attacks changes things entirely. It makes explicit the threat held over the political process in a way which democrats can neither evade nor tolerate.

It may also summon a savage

response. Unionist politicians are warning privately that loyalist killers will produce some kind of foul "spectacular" if the IRA has really (as they think) returned to war. Then Northern Ireland would slide back - except that, because of the bottled-up frustration of assorted maniacs, things would be even worse.

The pessimists believe this is bound to happen eventually. Some, like Conor Cruise O'Brien, expected it a year ago, and drew detailed word-pictures of how the mayhem would creep back as it became clear that the north would not be forced into a united Ireland. Others went silent, and waited. A few politicians, such as Norman Lamont, warned publicly that the peace process was embroiling the British government in apprehension. But no one wanted to hear them.

If the worst now happens, then lessons will be drawn. It will be said that one should never parley with



ANDREW MARR

The moderates could still design a new political process

the whole sorry episode shows up Major yet again as a gullible and rather weak politician, dangerously eager for liberal applause.

Each of these lessons should be refuted. It is nonsense to say that one shouldn't ever listen to terrorists; unless you are prepared to, you'll never know when a terrorist is becoming an ex-terrorist. You have to keep trying. It's the burden of democrats to hold out the hand - even if the hand is sometimes bitten off.

To say that the Northern Irish problem is hopeless may sound judicious and worldly-wise from the safe distance of London chubland, but it mentally condemns many thousands of bright, fresh-faced and cheerful fellow citizens to an early death, or to maiming, or bereavement. It wasn't a handful of liberal journalists and native leaders from outside the province who championed the peace process; it came from within Northern Ireland itself and is desperately wanted by hun-

dreds of thousands of ordinary, apolitical people, many of whom were brought up to hate one another and are now learning new ways.

Major's involvement, sometimes imaginative, sometimes stubborn, wasn't the result of his naivete or his lust for applause, but of a certain openness and courage. He could never move far without the Unionists - not merely because of the parliamentary constraints, but because without them there could be no settlement. In the event, Major took them further than they thought they'd ever go.

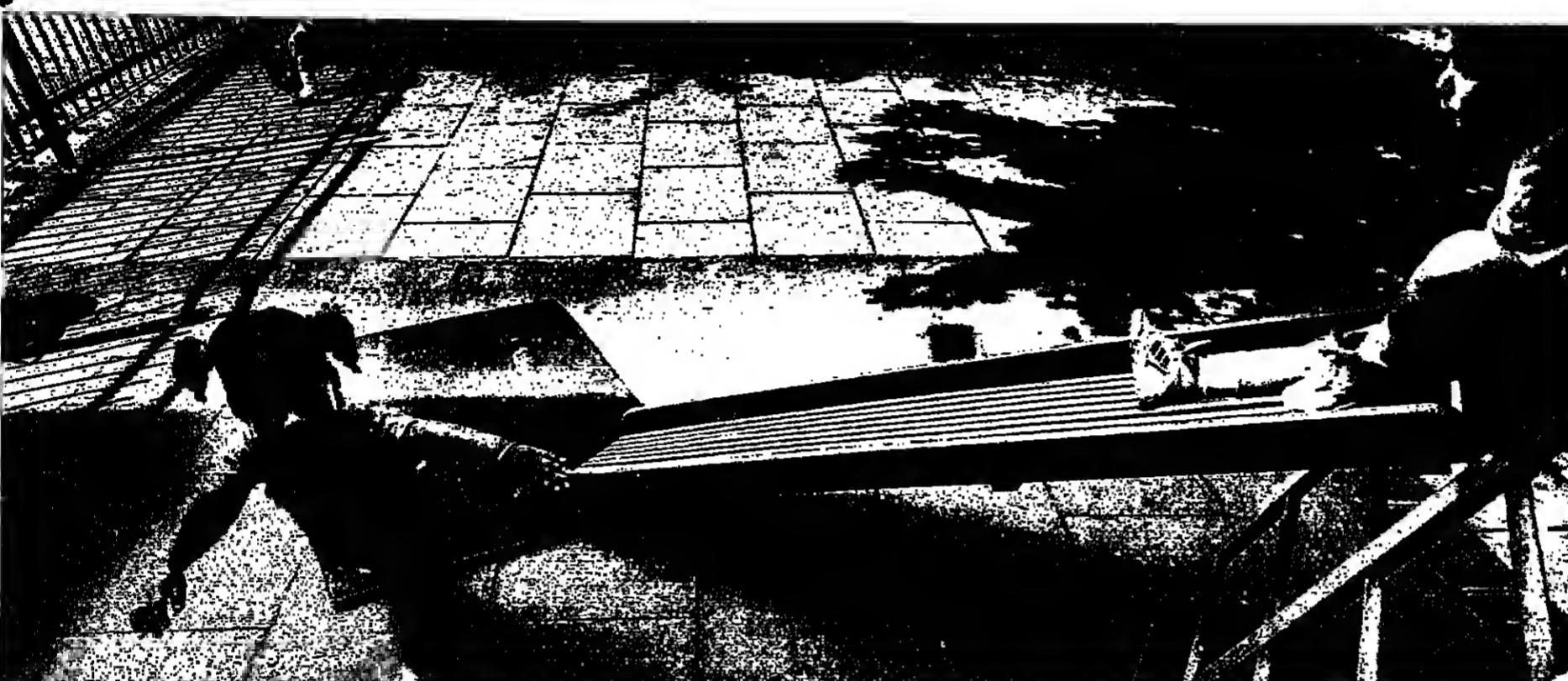
As his European beef war gets bogged down, and as his party continues to crumble, the crunching off-track of the peace process is a blow to Major's standing - and surely, if he's flesh and blood, to his morale. But if he is voted out, then Tony Blair will have to go back and pick up his pieces. Trying to draw in Adams and Sinn Fein was a necessary gamble. If it hasn't paid off, someone will have to try a similar

gamble with someone else in a few years' time.

Even now, there are shreds of hope. If Adams splits the republican movement and stands aside from the IRA, then the core of violent republicanism will be reduced. Many more people voted for him in the recent elections than can stomach a return to bombs and bullets. It is, I agree, unlikely that he will drown the hooliganism of his own past; but anything is possible.

Even if that doesn't happen then David Trimble - now in the strongest position of any Unionist leader for decades - and John Hume, and the rest of the moderates, can still work together and design a new political process for the province. They are changing themselves and by changing themselves, are changing the political weather too.

So no miracle has happened. So the path to a better Northern Ireland proves slippery, winding and treacherous. But the peacemakers, if not blessed, have to hold together and keep walking it. There is no other way.



Child's play: but unlike many other European countries, the UK has failed to establish a solid, high-quality education system for its under-fives

Photograph: Edward Sykes

Even a child could do it better

Belgians do it. The French do it. Even educated Swedes do it. But try as they might, the British just cannot organise a decent nursery-education system.

Yet again, our attempts to educate our under-fives properly have landed us in the soup. Ministers were hoping that their nursery voucher scheme, due to go national in April 1997, would turn out to be a vote-winner, but the House of Lords seemed to have other ideas, and voted to delay implementation until the full results of a pilot scheme in four areas are known - in effect until after the general election.

While other European nations provide nursery places for almost all their three- and four-year-olds, we still have room for only two thirds of ours. And many of those are in overcrowded primary-school reception classes, playgroups or day nurseries, which may not offer much in the way of education.

And this parlous state of affairs has not come about for lack of trying, either. Successive governments have talked about a universal nursery education since Margaret Thatcher first promised it back in the early Seventies, when she was education secretary.

Just one thing is certain: parents want this to happen. In France, where there are places available for all three-

year-olds, 98 per cent of parents take them up. Even parents in the four "phase one" voucher areas have welcomed the initiative, which gives them £1,100 to spend in a state or private school, or in a playgroup. A survey published this month by the preschool learning alliance showed that 80 per cent of playgroups felt parents were happy with the vouchers.

Parents who previously had to pay for nursery places benefit most. Among them is Carmel Carolan, a single mother whose son, Dean, has been going to the Imps playgroup in Westminster, Wandsworth, Kensington and Chelsea and Norfold, has been a moderate success in the least bit surprising. Parents are happy with the programme because ministers have made concessions to ensure nothing goes wrong. Mrs Carolan's voucher only pays for the full cost of Dean's place because the Government gave in to protests and abandoned plans to give playgroups only half the £1,100 value for each child.

The fact that the pilot scheme in Westminster, Wandsworth, Kensington and Chelsea and Norfold, has been a moderate success is not the least bit surprising. Parents are happy with the programme because ministers have made concessions to ensure nothing goes wrong. Mrs Carolan's voucher only pays for the full cost of Dean's place because the Government gave in to protests and abandoned plans to give playgroups only half the £1,100 value for each child.

There have been many other instances of almost staggering flexibility. Not enough nursery places for all Norfolk's four-year-olds? Hey presto, Gillian Shephard promises 16

new local-authority nursery units. Grunblies from Wandsworth about having to educate voucher-less four-year-olds from neighbouring horoughs? Lo and behold, almost £500,000 extra cash is provided, allegedly to compensate the council. Demands from all four authorities to redeem the vouchers through their local management of schools funding, giving them effective control of the scheme? No April could be a ghastly mess.

Next year things will be different. With every authority in the country involved, there will not be funds for hand-outs all round. The schools minister, Robin Squire, has admitted that there may not be enough places to go round, either. Without incentives for private firms to build new nurseries, the net result will be that some four-year-olds will be crammed into primary-school reception classes, while others sit at home.

Nursery education may not prove much of a winner for Labour, either. The opposition has committed itself to high-quality nursery education for all three- and four-year-olds, but it has not committed itself to the huge injection of public funds that may be needed. Instead, it has relied on the hope that the public-private partnerships can provide the necessary capital investment.

The problem with nursery education in the UK is that we put it in the same category as apple pie. It is a Good Thing, but it has never been at the top of our list. In the immortal words of the song, what we should be saying is: "Let's do it."

Fischer makes an unprecedented move

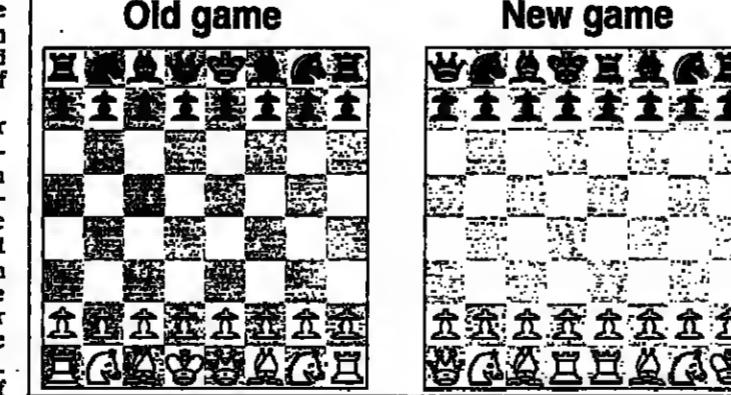
After 500 years, the greatest of the grandmasters has changed the rules of chess, says William Hartston

For only the second time in a millennium, something is about to happen that promises to improve the quality of the leisure activities of tens of millions of people.

This afternoon, in La Plata, Argentina, Bobby Fischer will change the rules of chess. The last time the rules were altered significantly was in the 1490s, when the scope of the queen and bishop were considerably enhanced and modern chess was born out of a more tedious version that had then been around for 900 years.

Bobby Fischer, 53, who won the world chess championship in 1972, has decided that while the rules were adequate for half a millennium, they now need a little tinkering with. His proposal, to be launched today as a new game called "Fischerandom Chess" is to dispense with the conventional placing of the pieces at the beginning of a game, instead shuffling the kings, queens and rooks at random among the squares they usually occupy.

After 500 years of intense study, the conventional starting position has



For 20 years after winning the world championship, Fischer never pushed a pawn in competition. Indeed, his only known creative achievement was a pamphlet entitled *I was tortured in Pasadena Jailhouse* - an account of his arrest on (totally unfounded) suspicion of a bank robbery. Yet the charisma of the name of Bobby Fischer is still highly potent. His match with Spassky in 1992 attracted a \$5m

purse - roughly three times the amount that the current champions, Garry Kasparov and Anatoly Karpov, can command.

Walking out of tournaments, demanding larger pawns (or smaller squares) on his chessboards, even having his lavatory seats lowered to meet his demanding specifications, all Fischer's perfectionist traits helped to build his unique reputation. It also

helped to have been the strongest player who ever lived. And when he began his comeback match in 1992 by splitting on a letter from the US Internal Revenue Service, the legend of Bobby Fischer as modern American folk hero was perfected. The only trouble is that he can only return in America on penalty of arrest and a huge fine for "trading with the enemy" for his sanctions-busting crime of defying the IRS by competing in Yugoslavia.

Having beaten the Russians and confounded the Americans, Fischer is now taking up his most difficult challenge: the game of chess itself. And anyone doubting that the reclusive American can change the rules should take a look at the fortunes of US Patent Number 4,884,255, inventor Robert J Fischer: the Bobby Fischer Chess Clock. The clock helps a player allocate his time sensibly and has been a runaway hit on the back of the Fischer name. Perhaps in another few years, we will all be doing the Bobby Fischer shuffle with our pieces at the start of each game too.

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obituaries/gazette

Sir Fitzroy Maclean Bt

Fitzroy Maclean owes his place in history to the extraordinary 18 months he spent as Winston Churchill's special envoy to the Yugoslav leader Josip Tito in 1943-45. He sometimes expressed regret that, as with his hero Bonnie Prince Charlie, the historically significant portion of his life was compressed into 18 months at a comparatively young age. More dispassionate commentators would say that he packed an unbelievable amount into his 85 years. Maclean always believed in the motto that it was better to live a day as a tiger than a year as a monkey, but in fact he managed to combine the excitement of the one with the longevity of the other.

His background as member of a Scottish clan and its Jacobite connection was extremely important to him. "Thank God I am a Maclean" was the family motto.

Born in 1911 in Egypt, the son of an officer in the Cameron Highlanders, Fitzroy inherited from his father the martial tradition and from his mother the love of languages. Educated at Eton and King's College, Cambridge, where he took a First in Part One of the Classical Tripos, Maclean was initially drawn to the academic life but the crisis in Europe in the early 1930s convinced him he should enter the Diplomatic Service, then a tightly knit body numbering no more than 250 souls. After passing the stiffly competitive examinations, the young Maclean was marked down as "one to note".

His initial three-year posting was to Paris, which he saw in the troubled context of the Front Populaire years. Then, in 1937, instead of opting for a "fast track" posting to Washington he made what was considered an eccentric decision to plump for a posting to Russia. He arrived at the time of the great purge trials, and in February 1938 was in court daily for the nine-day trial of Nikolai Bukharin, later memorably recreated in his first book, *Eastern Approaches*. Through a close friendship with his opposite number in the German embassy, he was able to give advance warning of the likelihood of a Nazi-Soviet pact.

His two years in the Soviet Union were also memorable for the many unauthorised journeys he made to the eastern Soviet Union, principally Samarkand, Bokhara, Tashkent, Batum, Tiflis. He led the Russian secret service agents, who dogged his steps, a merry dance, travelling on trucks and second-class trains. But he was adamant that he made these journeys for his own self-realisation and was never himself a secret agent.

In 1939 he was transferred to London, to the Russian desk of the Foreign Office's Northern

Department. He had always wanted to emulate his father and be a soldier, so when war broke out in September he was eager to sign up with a combat regiment. But the Foreign Office counted as a reserved occupation, and two dull years elapsed. Poring through service regulations, Maclean discovered the loophole he was looking for: an election as an MP, a Foreign Office man was obliged to resign. Using his charm and considerable diplomatic skills, he got himself adopted as the Conservative candidate at the 1941 by-election in Lancaster. He then immediately enlisted as a private in the Cameron Highlanders.

For an Etonian diplomat and prospective Member of Parliament to enter the ranks in such a crack regiment was an extraordinary thing to do, and the singularity of the decision has perhaps not been sufficiently underlined. Rubbing shoulders with tough squaddies from the Gorbals was a key formative process. Elected MP for Lancaster, he then immediately went to the Foreign Office.

After basic training Maclean was commissioned as a lieutenant and seconded to an elite commando unit being trained in Cairo to destroy the Baku oil-wells on the Caspian – a bizarre project to have been entertained against the property of an ally but one thought necessary if the German army broke through in the Caucasus. The project was soon shelved, so

Maclean, at a loose end in Cairo, accepted an invitation from David Stirling to join the newly formed Special Air Service. It is on his daring exploits behind enemy lines that Stirling based his reputation as war hero securely rests.

On one occasion, while trying to mine Benghazi harbour, Maclean posed as an Italian officer and, in fluent Italian, roundly berated the sentries for mutiny while mounting sentry duty. Seemingly a man oblivious to danger and with nine lives, Maclean had his only near brush with death after a car crash resulting from Stirling's reckless style at the wheel. He was unconscious for four days after the crash and later remarked: "David Stirling's driving was the most dangerous thing in World War Two!"

On recovery, Maclean took part in another raid on Benghazi and was then employed by General "Jumbo" Wilson in Persia (Iran) on a further mission, to arrest the pro-Nazi governor-general of Isfahan, General Zahidi. His rapid promotion, from lieutenant to brigadier in two years, provoked envy among his critics. But his success in these missions later fed his friend Ian Fleming to base aspects of the character

"soft on Communism". Several comments are in order. First, Maclean was always a fervent anti-Communist and of the Right. But he was a realist, unable to deny the evidence of his senses for ideological reasons, and he had a clear, military, non-political mandate from Churchill. Secondly, Tito would have prevailed in Yugoslavia with or without British aid, but Harold Macmillan sacked him in 1957, allegedly for poor performances in the House.

Created a baronet in 1957, Maclean branched out in other directions. He ran his own hotel, "The Creggan", on the shore of Loch Fyne, and the Chetniks were the military arm of Greater Serb nationalism. Events since the break-up of Yugoslavia in 1989 have tarnished the credibility of Serb nationalism. It is ironic that it took the horrors of the Yugoslav civil war before the claque of anti-Maclean tongues was finally silenced.

Tito's cabal was fully demonstrated by the Herculean task he performed in keeping Yugoslavia united for 35 years after the war. It will be surprising if he does not gain stature as post-war history is reassessed, and such revisionism can only vindicate the correctness of the advice Maclean gave Churchill in 1945.

Maclean the war hero found it difficult thereafter to find a niche for his unique talents. His autobiography *Eastern Approaches* was a best-seller in 1949, though none of the 15 books he wrote afterwards was

quite so well received. He continued as Conservative MP for Lancaster until 1959 when, wanting a Scottish constituency, he became the member for Bute and North Ayrshire, and served there until 1974. Churchill appointed him Under-Secretary of War in 1954, where he had an important behind-the-scenes role during the Suez crisis of 1956, but Harold Macmillan sacked him in 1957, allegedly for poor performances in the House.

On this deathbed he was a respected associate producer, writer and presenter of television travel documentaries, specialising in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Above all, he was a tireless traveller. He travelled light, with a kitbag containing a Russian novel and an ancient classical author, both in the original. At an age when most people have given up on linguistic ambitions, Maclean continued to hone his knowledge of French, Italian, German, Russian, Serbo-Croat, Latin and Greek.

An admirer of Margaret Thatcher, he steered her through the intricacies of Yugoslav politics, advised her to put her political money on Gorbatchev in 1985, and acted as special adviser to the Prince of Wales when he visited Tito in the 1970s.

The steep downward spiral towards disaster in Yugoslavia

after Tito's death in 1980 deeply saddened him. One of only three foreigners allowed to own property in the country during the Tito period, Maclean was a good part of each year at his seaside villa on the Adriatic island of Korcula.

A man of great physical courage and enormous charm, Fitzroy Maclean was certainly the last of a breed, a real-life imperial adventurer in the tradition of Kim and Richard Hannay and an action man in the mould of Sir Richard Burton and his own special hero, Bonnie Prince Charlie. He loved food and drink, good conversation and the company of pretty women. The initial image of a haughty, stave, privileged Etonian gave way, for those who knew him well, to a man with an advanced sense of humour and the absurd. The patrician persona masked an essentially simple man, with a rugged humanity that seemed to belie the breadth of his interests; there was nothing of the oddball about Maclean.

Politically he was the kind of Conservative who believes in order and hierarchy rather than original sin, and he expressed an optimistic view of human nature. He liked other human beings and was at ease with people from all walks of life, from dustmen to duchesses.

Frank McEwan
As his Scottish parliamentary colleague for the last 12 years of his 33 years as a Member of Parliament, writes Tam Dalyell,

I never heard Fitzroy Maclean say anything simplistic.

Had the House of Commons been televised when he and his generation, Conservative and Labour, were in the autumn of their parliamentary careers, a different impression would have been created on the viewer. These were people who had come to politics from very different experiences, and had done their apprenticeship not as professional researchers, but on the arid world of war danger. Their presence enhanced the House of Commons as a serious forum of the nation. In the early 1960s it simply would not have occurred to any of the generation of new MPs to be rude or cheeky to Maclean and his contemporaries.

Furthermore, as incoming prime minister, Harold Wilson handled the questions of such as Sir Fitzroy Maclean, Brigadier Sir John Smyth, Lt VC, Commander Sir John Maitland RN and Air Commodore Sir Arthur Vere Harcourt to his face that his speech at Fulton, Missouri, in 1946 coined the phrase "Iron Curtain" and ushering in the Cold War was unwise to the point of being ridiculous?

The day after John Smith's funeral the then government Chief Whip, Richard Ryder, said to me, "As we passed you in our official car the Prime Minister and I wondered who on earth was that man with you bent double struggling up the pavement with such courageous gallantry and tried to place him." "Fitzroy Maclean," I said, "determined to come to say goodbye to his Labour friend of the Scotland/USSR Association."

"A legend," said Ryder. "A legend of courageous gallantry."

Fitzroy Hen Maclean, diplomat, soldier, politician, writer, born Cairo 11 March 1911; MP (Conservative) for Lancaster 1941-59, for Bute and North Ayrshire 1959-74; CBE (mil) 1944; Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for War 1954-57; Bt 1957; KT 1993; married the Hon Mrs (Veronica) Phipps (née Fraser, two sons); died 15 June 1996.



A real-life adventurer in the tradition of Kim and Richard Hannay: Maclean at home at Strachur, Argyll, in 1988

Photograph: Tom Pilston

Bill Hughes



Typecasting: Hughes in 1988

Bill Hughes, typesetter, of Worcester, was the last of his kind. There is no one left who has either his skill or experience, and he must have been one of the very few men, or women, who had a working career of over 66 years in the same trade. He was appreciated as a printer in Loughborough in 1928 and trained as a Monotype operator, a skill he practised until ill-health caused him to stop working some two years ago.

His father was a dentist but Bill did not want to follow him and on the advice of his headmaster he went into printing. After training at Leicester College of Art (where he took

First Class honours in every subject), he moved around the country and in the Thirties settled in Worcester, where he remained for the rest of his life.

When he entered printing, the Monotype caster had more or less completed its takeover of the trade. For nearly 45 years after Gutenberg invented the technique of printing from movable type, every bit of printing, from Bibles to newspapers, was produced from type set by hand. That meant that every letter, every space, every bit of punctuation, was picked up from the case by an operator, arranged in lines, fastened together in a frame, was inked

and had a sheet of paper pressed against it. And, after all that, every letter and so on had to be cleaned of ink and replaced in the correct compartment of the case.

In the last few years of the 19th century, mechanical typesetting was invented but did not have any impact on the trade until after the First World War.

In the next decade Monotype machines took over all typesetting except for newspapers.

They were complicated affairs, in two parts: the keyboard which produced a roll of paper with holes punched in it, and the caster. The roll was fed

into this and controlled the ac-

tual casting of molten metal into type, spaces, and punctuation which were then arranged into lines. The operator had to be a sort of cross between a competent typist, a highly skilled mechanician accustomed to working to micrometric tolerances, and a layout artist.

Such men rarely lacked work

and Hughes found plenty in Worcester, which at that time had more printing firms than a city of its size warranted. When he retired in the early 1970s, as the computer revolution was beginning, he bought a couple of casters and a keyboard, and in 1973 set up in business for himself as Solotype. For over 20

years he cast type in his small workshop on the quayside at Upton-upon-Severn, about eight miles from Worcester. Whenever the Severn flooded he had to sandbag his doors, and once twice had to carry his electric motor up to his first-floor office.

For many years now type

has all but disappeared from the printing trade. Bill Hughes made his living from the few small printers who continued using type – fewer and fewer as time went by. But the market in which he took most pride was the private presses, with the hobby-printer to those large presses which are run on com-

mercial lines and produce magnificent volumes eagerly sought after by collectors.

His first customer was the late Dame Hilda Cumming who transformed the press at Stanbrook Abbey, outside Worcester, so that it became known throughout the world for its excellence. She set the type for most of her books and that fact alone is the best comment that can be made about Hughes's skill and workmanship. His later customers, including Whittington, Fleece and Rock Presses, regularly won printing awards with their books.

Bill Hughes was a delightful companion, whether gossiping

in the local pub at Upton (there are three within 50 yards of his workshop) or in the shop itself, operating his machinery. He was so familiar with it that even when his eyes began to give him trouble towards the end of his life he was still able to keep up his standards.

Besides his widow, Nora, he leaves a son, Alan, and two grandsons; all three are printers.

K. E. Parker

William Hughes, printer, born Hammerwich, Staffordshire 20 September 1912; married 1937 Nora Lock (one son); died Worcester 21 May 1996.

Poll tax defaulter facing gaol entitled to legal aid

LAW REPORT

19 June 1996

On 25 March 1991 Mr Benham appeared before Poole Magistrates' Court on an application by Poole Borough Council, under regulation 41 of the Community Charge (Administration and Enforcement) Regulations 1989 (SI 438), for an order committing him to prison for non-payment of a charge of £25. He was not represented by a lawyer, though he was eligible for "Green Form" legal advice and assistance before the hearing, and the justices could have made an order for assistance by way of representation ("Abwór") if they had thought it necessary. The justices found that Mr Benham's failure to pay the community charge was due to his "culpable neglect" because at the time of the hearing he lacked the means to pay the debt.

Article 6 provides that "in the determination of... any criminal charge against him, everyone is entitled to a fair hearing" (para 1) and, by para 3(c),

to defend himself in person or through legal assistance of his own choosing or, if he has not sufficient means to pay for legal assistance, to be given it free when the interests of justice so require.

The applicant submitted that the committal proceedings were criminal in nature and the interests of justice required him to be represented before the justices.

On his appeal by case stated, the Queen's Bench Divisional Court held that the justices had erred in finding

culpable neglect, and that the decision to commit him to prison would have been wrong even if there had been evidence of culpable neglect because at the time of the hearing he lacked the means to pay the debt.

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the committal proceedings were criminal in nature and the interests of justice required him to be represented before the justices.

Under neither the Greek nor the Abwór schemes was Mr Benham entitled as of right to be represented.

In all these circumstances, the interests of justice demanded that, in order to receive a fair hearing, Mr Benham ought to have had free legal representation during the proceedings before the justices. It followed that there had been a violation of article 6.

Paul McGrath, Barrister

Deaths

DEATHS
LUND: Engel, singer, in Raynham, on 15 April. Born 12 July 1900. Unique artist and friend.

WALLS: Constance Mary, formerly of Goldsborough Nursing Home, Blackheath, and lived in East Dulwich, died peacefully after a long illness, on 14 June 1996. Funeral 1.30pm, 21 June, Honor Oak Crematorium. No flowers please.

For Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS please telephone 0171-232 2011 or fax 0171-232 2010. Charges are £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

Royal Engagements

The Princess Royal, President of the Patron, Crime Concern, attended a Productivity Action Seminar at the Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, London, and attended a dinner in celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Royal Holloway and Bedford New College. The Duke of Gloucester attended a Concert of Church Music at the Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, London, and a gala dinner and pre-concert reception at the Royal Holloway and Bedford New College. The Duke of Kent attended a Royal Jersey Show, Jersey, and a dinner at the Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, London, and a pre-concert reception at the Royal Holloway and Bedford New College, London.

Birthdays

Mr Robert Ainsworth MP, 44; Sir Michael Alexander, former UK Permanent Representative, Nato, 60; Dr Neil Chalmers, Director, Natural History Museum, 54; The Right Rev John Dennis, Bishop of Edinburgh and Tweeddale, 65; Lt Gen Sir Peter Duffell, Inspector General, Doctrine and Training, Ministry of Defence, 57; Miss Eun Evans, Headmistress, King Edward VI High School, Birmingham, 58; The Right Rev John Hind, Bishop of Gibraltar in Europe, 51; Sir Louis Jourdan, actor, 77; Mr Bryan Keen, sculptor, 66; Right-Admiral Sir Michael Keighley, former MP, 82; Brigadier Eileen Nolan, former Director WRAC, 76; Mr Michael O'Brien MP, 42; Mr Raymond Powell MP, 68; Sir Francis Purchas, a former Lord Justice of Appeal, 77; Mr Salman Rushdie, novelist, 49; Sir John Shell, judge of the High Court of Northern Ireland, 58; Sir Alfred Shepherd, former chairman and chief executive, Wellcome Foundation, 71; Mr David Somersett, Fellow and Financial Adviser, Peterhouse, Cambridge, 66; Dom Antonio Sutich, Headmaster, Downside School, 46; Miss Kathleen Turner, actress, 42; Mr Rory Underwood, rugby player, 33; Mr Edmund Vestey, chairman, Blue Star Line, 64.

Lectures

Victoria and Albert Museum: Lesley Hoskins, "William Morris Wallpapers", 2.30pm. Tate Gallery: Elizabeth Lebec, "London: viewing beyond the gallery (B). Bermudseye inter-war films", 6.30pm.

Labour pledges facts and figures clean-up

NICHOLAS TIMMINS

Investment: Carpetright rolls out the profits
Market report: Barclays steals the limelight
Unit trusts

CITY & BUSINESS EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

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business

THE INDEPENDENT • Wednesday 19 June 1996

BUSINESS NEWS DESK: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098

£3bn borrowing surge dampens tax hopes

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

The Chancellor's scope for responsible tax cuts in the next Budget shrank even further yesterday with the news that government spending was £3.2bn more than its income last month. Without £1.1bn in privatisation revenue from the sale of Railtrack the gap in the Government's finances would have yawned even wider.

Adam Cole, an economist at brokers James Capel, said it left Kenneth Clarke "with only one policy lever to pull ahead of the

election – lower base rates". In his Mansion House speech last week the Chancellor insisted that bringing the government budget into balance in the medium term was a key policy aim, and he would make sure it was achieved.

But the City was disappointed by yesterday's figures, which showed borrowing adjusted for privatisation receipts was higher in the first two months of this financial year than at the same stage last year.

City experts think the total for 1996/97 could be up to £8bn higher than the current target of £2.4bn.

Andrew Smith, shadow chief secretary to the Treasury, said the figures called into question

the Chancellor's claim that public borrowing was on a downward trend.

Liberal Democrat Treasury spokesman Malcolm Bruce said: "It is clear the Government is heading for another blow-out on borrowing this year."

Mr Clarke is expected to adjust upwards his target for the public sector borrowing requirement when the Treasury publishes its new economic forecast next month.

City experts think the total for

That would mean very little shrinkage compared with last year's PSBR of £32.2bn, itself £3bn higher than the target set last November.

The reason for their scepticism is the toughness of the expenditure plans. The Government has successfully held spending to its ambitious targets for the past three years, and has an increase of only 1.2 per cent planned this financial year. If this is achieved it would mean a reduction in real terms.

Geoffrey Dicks, UK economist at NatWest Markets, believes a cut in real expenditure is "near-impossible in a pre-election year".

Departmental spending grew 3.3 per cent in the year to May, down from April's 7.5 per cent increase, but well above the target. Much of the over-run in the first two months of the financial year has been on the social security budget rather than across all departments, and it is probably too early to conclude that the pattern has been set for the year as a whole.

The slowdown in spending growth in May is encouraging, but it will need to be maintained in the months ahead, "Jonathan

Loynes, an economist at HSBC Markets, said.

After the concern about "missing" tax revenues towards the end of the last financial year, their growth has now started to overshoot the Treasury forecasts. Government receipts were 6.7 per cent higher in the year to May despite a 5 per cent fall in income tax revenues.

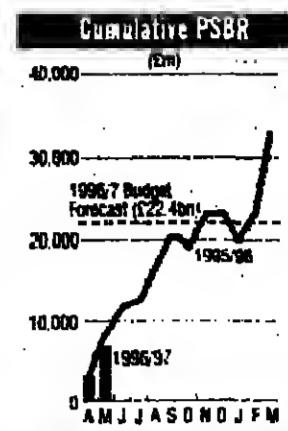
A combination of high income tax receipts last May and this year's tax cuts probably explains the drop.

VAT receipts, fingered as one of the main culprits for last year's shortfall, were up 16 per

cent. However, revenue from corporation tax, the other problem area in 1995/96, was flat.

The headline PSBR in May was exaggerated by an unexpectedly small repayment of borrowing by local authorities. They were in surplus by only £100m this May, £500m less than a year ago. Local authority reorganisation might explain why they spent more early in the financial year. As local authority borrowing is more or less capped over the year as a whole, this disappointment will be reversed later on.

Comment, page 17



Sumitomo faces fresh claims it knew of losses

PETER RODGERS,
DAVID USBORNE
and RICHARD LLOYD PARRY

Evidence mounted yesterday that a number of senior officials at Sumitomo Corporation may have known for some time of loss-making trading accounts operated by the disgraced trader Yasuo Hamanaka, as US law officials began a criminal investigation into the \$1.8bn case.

The US Attorney's office in New York opened a formal grand jury investigation to search for links between Mr Hamanaka and copper trading firms in the US.

This means criminal investigations are under way on both sides of the Atlantic, following an announcement last Friday that Britain's Serious Fraud Office is looking into the affair.

The US Attorney's investigation became known after Global Minerals & Metals Corporation in New York said it had been served with a subpoena on Monday requesting the production of documents.

Its founder, David Campbell, was also subpoenaed to testify before the grand jury, said Eliot Sloane, a spokesman for the firm.

"We're not the target here, at all. It's Hamanaka," added Mr Sloane. The company's lawyer, Peter Hayles, said: "The company is confident that at the end of the inquiry, it will be shown that there is nothing wrong."

The corporation was trying to reassure us but it had the opposite effect since they could answer so few questions'

Sumitomo said specifically on Monday that the Global accounts operated in its name were not authorised.

But both Global and Merrill said the brokerage accounts were properly authorised by themselves, against company rules, and there have been reports that they were secret devices operated as part of Mr Hamanaka's fraudulent schemes.

Mr Sloane said Global expected to be able shortly to publish documentary evidence of the claim. Rudolf Wolff refused to comment.

Simultaneously, details also surfaced of a parallel civil inquiry by the Commodities Future Trading Commission, which is the main fed-

eral body that oversees commodities trading in the US.

Sumitomo confirmed that Global Sloan confirmed that Global was a large buyer and seller of copper on behalf of Sumitomo and it also acted as a broker, using accounts at Merrill Lynch and Rudolf Wolff in London, maintained in Sumitomo's name for hedging the Japanese giant's copper exposure.

Sumitomo has declared that Mr Hamanaka authorised these accounts by himself, against company rules, and there have been reports that they were secret devices operated as part of Mr Hamanaka's fraudulent schemes.

Mr Hamanaka has declared that he was up to date.

Mr Hamanaka has also left open the possibility that Sumitomo may sue Mr Hamanaka and that

senior management, including the Sumitomo president, Tomiochi Akiyama, might resign and hinted that a proposed buy-up of the corporation's own shares, scheduled for a general shareholders' meeting on 27 June, was now in jeopardy.

He added that the corporation would "thoroughly reinforce our internal control system," although he failed to explain how this might be achieved.

In a further unsuccessful attempt at damage limitation, Sumitomo gave a private briefing to securities analysts from major brokerages to answer questions about Mr Hamanaka's losses. "They were trying to reassure us, but in my case I had the opposite effect since they were able to answer so few of our questions," said Paula Sugawara of Lehman Bros. "I still think there's a lot of bad news yet to come out. To be running up those kinds of losses and the company not to know seems incredible."

"We had expected the company to give us more details about the loss but they didn't, so it was very disappointing," said Kota Nakao, an analyst at SBC Warburg, who has reversed his recommendation on Sumitomo from buy to sell. Sumitomo shares closed 20 yen higher at 1,030 yen, after a 200 yen fall on Monday.

Mr Hamanaka also left open the possibility that Sumitomo may sue Mr Hamanaka and that

sumitomo's surveillance of the copper market."

In Japan, Sumitomo's vice-president, Mutsumi Hashimoto, gave an evasive performance, refusing to comment on reports linking Mr Hamanaka's copper trades with Global Minerals and Metals. Global, founded in 1993, is reported to have had close ties with Sumitomo to the extent that the securities house even offered to invest as much as \$3m to fund its creation.

Mr Hashimoto also left open the possibility that Sumitomo may sue Mr Hamanaka and that

sumitomo's surveillance of the copper market."

Sumitomo has been unable to track down Mr Hamanaka, who is said by his daughter to have



Facing the music: There are growing doubts about the future of Tomiochi Akiyama (centre), the Sumitomo president

left the family home in Kawasaki, near Tokyo, late last week for an unknown destination. Sumitomo claims to have no knowledge of his whereabouts.

In London, Winchester Commodity Group said it "vehemently denies" responsibility for any Sumitomo losses

It said it had had minimal involvement with Sumitomo in the last 12 months during which many brokers were heavily engaged representing the Japanese firm. Winchester said it would be happy to help any inquiry and "has nothing to fear".

The London Metal Exchange, which has stayed silent on the scandal since the weekend, promised a statement today after a meeting of its copper specialists yesterday. The price of copper remained stable in London, \$10 higher at \$1,990 a tonne, but trade slowed to a trickle.

Nymex, the New York energy and metals market, has been campaigning for tighter regulation of the London Metal Exchange since well before the Sumitomo crisis emerged, because of concerns that problems could spill over into the US.

It is likely that over the past three years, not all of Mr Hamanaka's deals turned sour on him. In 1994, copper prices rose to about £2,000 a tonne, but trade slowed to a trickle.

By contrast, a number of US hedge funds, including one headed by George Soros and the Tudor Fund, bet against him that the market would fall.

It is likely that over the past three years, not all of Mr Hamanaka's deals turned sour on him. In 1994, copper prices rose to about £2,000 a tonne, but trade slowed to a trickle.

But by the beginning of this year, his insistence that de-

Hamanaka cornered by betting against the market

NIC CICUTTA

By the time Sumitomo Corporation was forced to admit the scale of its huge losses at the hands of Yasuo Hamanaka, most back-street scrap metal merchants already knew what he was up to.

Their trade magazines had long been writing about the activities of "Mr Five Per Cent", the man able to determine the helter-skelter prices of the used

copper pipes and boilers they had in since at least 1993.

The attention of the London Metal Exchange, the premier world metals market, had been drawn three years ago to a significant squeeze taking place in the availability of copper.

In essence, the cash price of copper – available two days' notice – was higher than three-month futures contracts for the same metal, a process known as "backwardation".

Sumitomo, a significant end-

user of copper, has an interest in controlling its price, both to obtain the metal cheaply and to ensure that its future supply is obtained at stable prices. Mr Hamanaka's job was to deliver this supply to his employers and, where possible, to make any additional profits for the company from his dealing.

The rationale used by Mr Hamanaka in 1993, which ran contrary to market expectations, was that supply of copper

would lag behind demand for it in the short term and over a period of years. Although he denied rigging the market, some dealers suspected his comments indirectly explained the logic of Sumitomo's activities.

It is likely that over the past three years, not all of Mr Hamanaka's deals turned sour on him. In 1994, copper prices rose to about £2,000 a tonne, but trade slowed to a trickle.

By contrast, a number of US hedge funds, including one headed by George Soros and the Tudor Fund, bet against him that the market would fall.

Cowie drives away with British Bus in £302m deal

Cowie will also take on British Bus' £100m of debt.

British Bus is strong in the Midlands, Yorkshire and the North West, while Cowie's beat is in south and south London.

Cowie chief executive Gordon Hodges described the deal as: "The last remaining opportunity for a strategic acquisition of an independent business in the UK bus industry." He said the company was still looking for other deals.

Last year, British Bus made operating profits of £43m on sales of £261m. Cowie shares closed 30p higher at 40p.

Michael Cannon has made a fortune for the second time in three years by selling his Magic Pub chain to Greene King for nearly £200m.

The deal, which Greene King will partly finance through a £90m rights issue, will more than double the East Anglian brewer's managed house estate to 462 out of a total of 1,139 pubs.

Mr Cannon, chairman of Magic Pub, is understood to have made about £70m from the deal. Managing director Philip Snook, finance director Tom Gill and the senior management team, who together owned 10 per cent of the company, also made a substantial amount, while much of the rest went to institutional investors led by CINV.

Now in his mid-50s, Mr Cannon began in the leisure business as a Barmy chef and opened his first pub about 20 years ago in Bristol. An early venture, Cannon Inns, collapsed, but he later merged his other leisure interests into West Country pub chain Devenish.

Having fought off brewer Bodiddingtons in a bitter bid battle, he then sold Devenish to the pub, drinks and hotel operator, Greenalls, in 1993 for more than £200m. His share of that was about £25m, of which about half

was invested in Magic Pub. He has acquired a reputation as a low-cost renovator of pubs.

Mr Cannon was not available for comment yesterday, but said in a statement: "The business fits very well with Greene King and I am sure that this deal will take it a long way."



Michael Cannon: Made £70m from the pub sale

Magic Pub is centred on London and the South and operates in three divisions. The main pub operation has 209 outlets, of which 200 are managed. They are free houses, but have arrangements with suppliers. In addition, 47 pub restaurants are grouped under the Hungry Horse name, while 21 hotels and inns operate as Countryside Inns.

Credit cards brush with NCC

CLIFFORD GERMAN

Customers who claim against their credit card companies when goods and services they bought are faulty or sub-standard are routinely being brushed aside and told to claim against the retailer, according to a Department of Trade Industry consultation document.

The NCC also wants to make sure that consumers are aware that they have an equal right of claim and has called on the DIT to ensure that credit card companies accept their responsibility to meet the full bill for claims, not just the amount paid by card.

The Credit Card Research Group, which represents virtually all the companies issuing

Mastercard and Visa cards in the UK, yesterday rejected the suggestion that it ignores claims for faulty goods and sub-standard services.

It argues that 95 per cent of the 20,000 claims its members receive in an average year involve cases where the supplier has gone bankrupt, and the credit card company assumes liability.

Typically these are items such as holidays, furniture, computers and mail-order goods for which consumers pay in advance and await delivery.

In the remaining cases, the CGRC agrees card companies

will suggest that the first port of call should be the supplier of the goods. It also claims to have the agreement of the Office of Fair Trading and the Consumer Association that this is a logical way of proceeding.

However, the NCC says its evidence has come from trading standards officers and Citizens Advice bureaux. They believe that in many cases consumers are told to pursue the supplier through to the courts in an attempt to get justice, and are not reminded that under Section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act they have an equal right to claim against the card company.

In the remaining cases, the CGRC agrees card companies

business

Carpetright rolls out the profits with right formula

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY NIGEL COPE

The share price reaction to Carpetright's results was similar to that regularly experienced by Next. A cracking set of results is met by a fall in the share price because the figures were not even better. True, the results were at the lower end of expectations but a 28 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £25.2m is not to be sniffed at. Most retailers would kill for a set of results such as these.

It is clear that Carpetright's chairman, the ever-enthusiastic Lord Harris of Peckham, has got his formula right: low prices, decent value and regular promotions to keep the customers interested.

Carpetright already has 12 per cent of the UK carpet market and the target of 30 per cent by the end of the decade looks achievable.

Like-for-like sales improved by a staggering 13 per cent last year and the trend has continued since the April year-end.

This is even more impressive when you consider that the overall market shrank by 4 per cent last year.

To bolster sales, Carpetright offered more special promotions, which shaved one percentage point off the margin, but that should be clawed back this year.

By the year-end Carpetright was trading out of 246 stores, including 200 of the core chain.

The start-up of the Premier Carpet concessions and the larger Carpet Depot formats cost £1.6m last year. A further 30 Premier Carpet concessions should open in the next 12 months, taking the total to 77.

Another 25 Carpet Depots will also open, taking the total to 34. The plan is for a nationwide network of 70. There must be some cannibalisation between the store formats, though Carpetright says not.

Lord Harris has ruled out a special dividend or share buy-back, preferring to use the £1.3m cash pile for store openings and a progressive dividend policy.

With only half its target market share figure in the UK, there is still plenty more to go for in the domestic market.

The forthcoming flotation of Allied Carpets will add to competition, though Carpetright says it will give the sector more visibility.

Investors who bought Carpetright shares when they floated at 148p three years ago have seen their investment rise fourfold.

With the shares down 29p to 594p yesterday and analysts fore-

casting profits of £36m this year, they are trading on a slightly more sensible forward rating of 18. Fair value.

Hazlewood to savour growth

Things could be looking up for Hazlewood Foods, the mixed bag of food companies which includes ready-made meals and pork and potato production. The company sounded a long-awaited note of optimism yesterday. The feeling is that last year's nightmare of rising raw material prices and inability to pass on price increases to retailers is now easing.

If this is a recovery, it would be before time. The shares have been an appalling investment, underperforming the market by 65 per cent in the last five years.

The company's problem has been a ragbag of often unrelated businesses that were too small to achieve market dominance. Management

have now sold volatile businesses such as shellfish and ice cream through the paper and happy businesses have yet to be offloaded.

But five or six years of restructuring is beginning to pay off. The company bounced back to profits of £34m in the year to March. This

compared with the previous year's £37m loss caused by restructuring provisions. More encouraging is the 4 per cent rise in like-for-like sales.

Margins are also improving, rising from 4.9 per cent to 5.3 per cent. Price rises have started to stick. In convenience foods and ready-made

meals there is a push towards higher-value, higher-margin ranges.

Problems areas include the meat and deli business which is being hampered by rival Unigate's pork division. Profits fell by a third last year and the BSE scare will knock around £2m off the bottom line this year.

There is still an over-reliance on commodity businesses. And unlike most food groups, Hazlewood is moving closer towards the major supermarkets, which now account for 45 per cent of its business.

In the short term, Hazlewood should benefit from the more benign market conditions. But further out its exposure to supermarkets is still a worry. BZW is forecasting profits of £37m this year. With the shares unchanged at 102p, they trade on a forward multiple of nine. Hold.

First Leisure slow but sure

Investors who demand instant results should probably shy away from First Leisure, the kind of company for which the concept "medium-term" could have been invented. But patience is its own reward, and the company's careful, moderately

aggressive strategy looks as if it will bear fruit in time.

Pre-tax profits were up 5 per cent to £18m in the six months to April but stripping out asset disposals the figure was flat at £16.5m.

The National Lottery and scratch cards have taken their toll on discretionary spending, which affects all First Leisure's divisions such as bingo, bars and bowling. But compared with rival leisure companies, First Leisure has performed creditably. The company is hopeful that the drop in scratch card sales will free up more cash for spending on other leisure pursuits.

First Leisure has also made good use of its cash flow, expanding its Birmingham brand bars, its Riva "new style" bingo halls and its lucrative night clubs. All three areas are good profit centres, and the company has earmarked another £50m in the next 18 months to build even more sites.

Longer term, the company may want to sell non-core assets, such as the rather tired resorts at Blackpool.

But for now at least, they throw off useful cash.

With analysts expecting full-year pre-tax profits of £43m the stock is on a multiple of 19 times, falling to 18 in 1997. The shares jumped 11p on the results to close at 369p. Hold.

CITY DIARY

JOHN WILLCOCK

Rector makes small beer of ailing churches



Pious hop: Rector plans to brew a mean ale for profit

Scottish & Newcastle and Bass had better watch out. A Sussex rector has floated his own brewery and he's got God on his side. Not that the Revd Godfrey Broster of Plumpton Green has any very ambitious plans for expansion or acquisitions.

He has launched Rectory Ale to help cover the horrendous repair bill for the three churches in his parish – one Saxon, one 12th century and one 19th century. After all, he says, the main brewers before the Reformation in the 16th century were the monasteries.

Rather than pass the beginning bowl around once again he has rounded up his parish flock and offered them 1,500 shares in Rectory Ale at £2 each, with a minimum subscription of £100 and a limit of £200.

"It's been over-subscribed," Mr Broster says proudly. "I got the idea from a prospectus for a flotation which I invested in myself."

He reckons brewing two or three barrels of traditional ales a week could generate profits of £1,000 in the first year. How about the dividend policy? "I hope to pay a dividend – I haven't said I won't – it all depends on trading. We'll have to wait and see."

Local pubs have agreed to take the strong Rectory's Revenge (abv 5.4), Rectory's Pleasure (abv 3.8) and Person's Porter (abv 3.6). Any plans for larger? "Oh no, that needs cooling apparatus – you'd really have to go big for that. I do brew the odd stout on request, though." And the flotation's been done without paying a penny in advisers' fees. A miracle.

A secondee from the Japanese version of the DTI, Mita, will soon be helping UK firms to develop more business – with Japan. Hideo Suzuki has started a two-year secondment to the DTI. Based in

the DTI's automotive directorate, he will work closely with the UK car industry to help build relationships with Japan and increase trade in the automotive sector – one of the DTI's target areas under the Action Japan campaign. No doubt Mr Suzuki will help to rev up the motor sector.

The *Dispatches* programme on Channel 4 tonight puts the boot into "the lucrative world of the liquidators" – asking why hundreds of firms have been closed down, some perhaps unnecessarily – and exposing sharp practice among some smaller practitioners who engage in improper financial manoeuvring.

All fair enough, I suppose, but it does seem to be kicking a sector when it's down. The senior partner at one of the biggest insolvency firms told me gloomily on Monday that "the trend for company collapses in the UK is still down. It probably won't go up again until 1998. We're having to lay people off." Poor things.

What is it with the Bulgarian football team? Not their defeat last night at the hands of the French in Euro96, but their constant switching of hotels in the North-east, to local chagrin. First Scarborough council forked out £20,000 to put them up at a hotel, only for Hristo Stoichkov to decide it was boring. The Bulgarians then booked rooms in the Swallow, Stockton-on-Tees, which would have meant the Romanian team moving out on the double. Just as the Darlington council was crowding about this coup, Stoichkov whipped his team off instead to the Holiday Inn in Seaton Burn, just six miles from Newcastle, where they were playing.

Cue outrage from Darlington. "What kind of hotels are they used to in Bulgaria anyway?" pondered one observer.

Just when Will Hutton and his ideas on the "stakeholder economy" seem to be everywhere, here comes a bunch of businessmen who have seen the light. The likes of Martin Sorrell of WPP Group and Stuart Hampshire, chairman of John Lewis, have signed up to help found the Centre for Tomorrow's Company, a think-tank devoted to reforming British business. An inquiry by the Royal Society for the encouragement of the Arts, Manufacture and Commerce (RSA) forms the basis for the group.

The report advocates the Hutton-ish "inclusive approach". This is pretty touchy-feely stuff for hard-headed businessmen. "Until we free ourselves from adversarialism in business relationships, UK supply chains will continue to underperform." No more price wars or contested bids, then?

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IS IT THAT WE'VE DOUBLED THE NUMBER OF FLIGHTS ACROSS THE ATLANTIC IN THE LAST YEAR?

IS IT THAT WE WERE NAMED BEST TRANSATLANTIC BUSINESS CLASS BY ENTREPRENEUR MAGAZINE FOR THE THIRD YEAR IN A ROW?

IS IT BECAUSE WE'RE THE ONLY BUSINESS CLASS TO OFFER COMPLIMENTARY LIMOUSINES IN OVER 125 U.S. CITIES?

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Lessons black



COMMENT

The Chancellor has fallen prey to a very human characteristic; on nearly all the important numbers he has been over-optimistic, sometimes hopelessly so'

Clarke's difficulty with figures is worrying

KENNETH CLARKE might have complete faith in his own handling of the UK economy (last week's Mansion House speech) but others would be forgiven for just the faintest hint of doubt. This is nothing as dramatic as full-blown atheism yet (always excepting the Euro-sceptics of course, who don't count, anyway), but there is a growing band of the mildly agnostic.

On most conventional measures, Mr Clarke's performance has indeed been a highly commendable one. But there is one area where he has fallen prey to a very human characteristic; on nearly all the important numbers he has been over-optimistic, sometimes hopelessly so. Public sector borrowing is just one. Even with the benefit of a £1.1bn net contribution to the Government's finances from the sale of Railtrack, the PSBR last month came in at £3.2bn. The likely overshoot for the year is now anything up to £8bn, which doesn't give a Chancellor promising sound public finances much, if any room, for tax cuts.

If borrowing were the only area of concern, then that might be thought acceptable, but it is actually symptomatic of a whole series of missed forecasts. The Chancellor has been persistently over-optimistic about the scope for improvement in public spending. His growth forecast for this year looks way out of line, something which is expected to be corrected in new Treasury predictions next month that will cut the growth number from 3 per cent to perhaps as low as 2.5 per

cent. Even inflation, though plainly tamed, is above target. Not so hot after all, eh?

If the Government were a publicly quoted company, it would never get away with such recklessly misleading predictions. The Treasury's persistent promises of jam tomorrow world long ago have been rattled, and its chief executive thrown overboard. But then a national economy is a rather more complex animal than even the largest of multinational corporations. The Chancellor perhaps deserves the benefit of the doubt, even if his characteristically relaxed view of the importance of forecasts smacks a little of complacency.

In any case, Mr Clarke's ever-so-convenient difficulty with the figures is hardly unique. It should be recalled that, on average, the PSBR overshoot forecast by £1.0bn a year. On that measure, the Chancellor isn't doing too badly. And don't forget, the Chancellor's aim is to get the budget back in balance only over "the medium term" (the Mansion House speech again). In Treasury parlance, that's five years away.

But hold on a moment. Five years is a rather longer time horizon than the Treasury was forecasting for a balanced budget at the time of its last statement in November – one year longer to be precise. It seems that once again hope is to be postponed. You don't need to be an expert on these matters to figure out why. If short-term forecasts don't matter very much, it is not going to be hard to make them justly a healthy package of

tax-cutting pre-election measures. No wonder Mr Clarke was able to insist in his Mansion House speech that policy was being set on the assumption the present Government would be re-elected. Wonderful thing, the never-ever.

Regulators cloud Southern battle

For the time being, the battle for Southern Water is in abeyance but it cannot be too long before the auction hots up once more with a new bid from ScottishPower. Bidding wars are nearly always bad news for the poor unfortunate that ends up with the prize. In this case, however, it is not just shareholders in the two rival bidders – Scottish and Southern Electric – that need to be concerned. Both bids involve a sizeable chunk of debt. As a consequence, regulators too are becoming highly exercised by the possibility of overpaying.

Southern Water already has a quite substantial accumulated backlog of incomplete capital spending – its underspend could be as high as £300m. The last thing regulators want is an over-gearred company incapable of meeting its obligations. That way the customer will ultimately end up picking up the tab. The risk of this happening with the Southern Electric bid seems to be rather higher than with the Scottish alternative. The Southern Electric bid is essentially a defen-

sive one to keep the Scots out. Southern Electric may in these circumstances think that to overpay is the lesser of two evils. Not so the regulators, who have become increasingly concerned about the general trend towards equity cancellation, and its replacement with debt, among the utilities. It may well be they have something to say about "sky's the limit" bidding wars.

Baby Aim is a bouncing one-year-old

Today is the first anniversary of the Alternative Investment Market. With a year under its belt, it's worth conducting a short health check. Aim was set up after a long wrangle over how tightly it should be regulated. The compromise was a market with few rules, and with the main responsibility for ensuring that companies on Aim were honest and decent given to the nominated advisers who bring them to market.

In the event, there have been almost as many new issues on Aim as companies transferring from the old Rule 4.2 market and from the unsuccessful USAI, which is being phased out at the end of the year. In the 11 months to the end of May, 80 new entrants to Aim raised £347m new money. Another 82 companies transferred from the 4.2 market and two from the USAI.

At the start Aim was slow to produce new money for companies, but then things picked

up. Some £30m was raised in March, £56m in April and £53m in May, with market participants predicting a substantial increase this month.

This may not sound large compared with the venture capital needs of British industry. But these are mostly small companies and it is the numbers of new entrants that count – a total of 13 in May alone.

It is hard to buy a large slice of shares without moving the price excessively, so larger deals are naturally taking place off market. Increasing the liquidity of the market will remain a key objective. Even so, Ivory & Sime Barnsmead, which raised £44m this spring to invest in an Aim investment trust, is said to be ahead of its target of investing half the funds within three months, and the trading volume of 4.2 stocks has melted since they moved over to Aim. On the whole then, Aim is fulfilling its purpose of providing a market, and a source of capital, for smaller companies.

The main question mark now is over how the Exchange copes with the collapses that are inevitable in a market of more than 160 small companies. Some will go to the wall because they are intrinsically risky, and if their prospectuses said so, who can complain. But others will be bad apples. The Stock Exchange will have to take a tough line with nominated advisers in such cases if the new market is to establish long-term credibility. But thus far, the babe seems to be in rude health.

Minorco sells 10% Matthey stake for £132m

ROGER TRAPP

Minorco, the South African-owned natural resources group, has pulled out of the precious metals and specialist ceramics group Johnson Matthey by selling its near-10 per cent stake to broker SBC Warburg for £132m.

Warburg was understood to be seeking to place the stock at about 625p a share. Johnson Matthey closed down 20p at 630p.

The company – which is owned by Anglo American, the Oppenheimer family and De Beers, and chaired by Julian Oggie Thompson – explained that the sale of the 9.9 per cent holding was part of a programme of disposals designed to strengthen the company's balance sheet as it prepared to



Julian Oggie Thompson: raising cash assets

develop several significant mining projects around the world. Explaining that the stake had been a "non-strategic investment", a Minorco spokeswoman said that the company had been "a totally different animal" when the Johnson Matthey shares were acquired from Charter Consolidated at 490p in February 1993.

For example, Minorco had wanted to be exposed to the platinum market, she said.

Recently, Minorco acquired several mines at various stages of development and estimates that these will require funding of about £2bn, half of which will come from the Minorco balance sheet. As a result, Minorco is looking to increase its cash assets.

In February this year, Minorco sold a 9.6 per cent holding worth about \$82m in US oil and gas company Santa Fe Energy Resources.

A month later, it received a total of about £250m by disposing of an 18.9 per cent stake in Australian mining group Normandy Mining and a 3.7 per cent interest in the company's gold mining arm, PosGold.

The spokeswoman said Minorco would be reviewing the situation and selling other investments as the need arose.

Last year, Minorco, whose chief executive is Hank Slack, announced a 51 per cent increase in underlying profits to \$365m.

IN BRIEF

• Japan's economy grew by 3.0 per cent in the first quarter of 1996 compared with the previous three months – the strongest quarterly performance since the beginning of 1973 before the impact was felt of the first oil shock. Gross domestic product rose by an annual rate 12.7 per cent. Growth was boosted by almost every category, from consumption to capital expenditure to government spending and housing investment. Weak exports and strong imports were the only negative factors on growth.

Bloomberg

• US housing starts in May fell by 4.7 per cent to 1.43 million. Higher mortgage rates and rising borrowing costs for builders were blamed for the larger-than-expected drop.

• Marks & Spencer's top five directors made almost £1.5m from the exercise of share options last year. Chairman Sir Richard Greenbury, whose salary rose marginally to £816,000, made £266,000. Deputy chairman Keith Oates made £317,000. Three other directors, Guy McKracken, Peter Salsbury and Andrew Stone, cashed in options worth £340,000, £352,000 and £208,000 respectively.

• Cable & Wireless will make £60m from the sale of a stake in Asia Satellite Communications, which is joining to the Hong Kong stock market today. C&W is reducing its holding in AsiaSat from 33.3 per cent to 23 per cent. Its new stake is worth £150m, based on the public offer price of HK\$20 per share.

• BT said its "friends and family" discount scheme now has over 5 million residential subscribers. The scheme offers 10 per cent savings on calls to five nominated telephone numbers. Membership has doubled since the £4.99 joining fee was scrapped in April and the discount increased from 5 per cent.

• First Bus, Britain's largest bus company, reported an 11 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £22m last year due to restructuring costs. Operating profits rose from £32.6m to £35m. The figures exclude the Greater Manchester Bus and SB Holdings of Glasgow acquisitions, which were made after the year-end.

• The European Commission is expected to delay until next week a decision to outlaw DM240m (£103m) in subsidies granted to an investment by German car-maker Volkswagen in Saxony, eastern Germany. The package is helping VW finance car and engine plants in Saxony intended to increase production of the Golf marque. The total cost of the investment is put at DM4.7bn.

• Chiroscience confirmed it was being sued for alleged wrongful dismissal by a former deputy chairman, but the drugs firm said the case was without basis and unlikely to succeed. A spokesman for the company said Nowell Stebbing was also claiming alleged wrongful removal of share options worth up to £5.5m.

• Banner Homes is halving its interim dividend to 0.7p after annual pre-tax profits fell from £1.27m to £751,000. Dwindling supplies of land are forcing land prices above previous peaks, Banner said.

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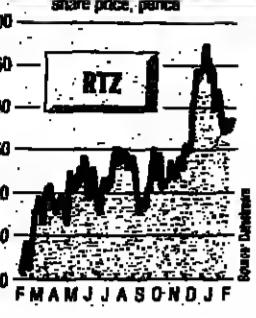
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market report/shares

DATA BANK

FT-SE 100	3,756.4 - 5.1
FT-SE 250	4454.7 - 7.5
FT-SE 350	1898.3 - 2.8
SEAQ VOLUME	749.9m shares, 28,215 bargains
Gilts Index	91.92 - 0.98

SHARE SPOTLIGHT


Cheerful Barclays and despondent BTR steal limelight


MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN
Stock market reporter
of the year

Barclays, the banking group, and BTR, the suffering conglomerate, dominated a lacklustre stock market.

The bank's story was one of optimism with the shares said to be heading for 900p, but for BTR it was another round of anxiety and uncertainty.

In busy trading Barclays rose 18p to 800p with the market enjoying its adroit sale of part of its 31 shareholding and continuing to speculate it has a big deal on its banking floor; perhaps the flotation of its Barclays de Zoete Wedd investment side.

Rumours BZW is set to be demerged have been flying around the market for some weeks. In some quarters the deal is seen as a forerunner to unlocking BZW.

BTR fell 5p to 259p, lowest for four years. The 1995/96 warrants dropped to 95p; they could be dead in the water, giving holders the right to subscribe for one new share at 258p in the 30 days following September's interim report.

The latest decline was sparked by stories that big investors were being sound out about a possible dividend cut; a reduced profit forecast by BZW and suggestions the conglomerate had called analyst meetings for next week.

BTR refused to confirm any meetings had been arranged. "We never comment on market rumours," said the company's response to inquiries.

The group has three sets of warrants outstanding. This year's would produce £240m; next year's £350m and the 1997 warrants £425m.

There is little doubt BTR would sorely miss the income as the proceeds have almost certainly been factored into its cash calculations.

The 1997 warrants, also offering a switch into shares at 258p, fell 3.5p to 21.5p; the

1998 version is now down to 6p. The strike price is 405p.

The rest of the market had another uneventful session with the FT-SE 100 index giving up 3.1 points at 3,756.4.

Hopes are rising that ScottishPower is on the verge of lifting its offer for Southern Water.

In first splash, £1.5bn was topped by Southern Electric's £1.0bn. Scottish shares were little changed at 305p; they have

felt the strain of bid action and are only just above their 12-month low.

Southern Electric was dulled 4p to 672p and the target slipped 5p to 988p.

Smith & Nephew, the

health-care group, stretched to a new high of 213.25p as takeover hopes mingled with prospects for its artificially

grown skin development, but Carlton Communications was caught out by suggestions Disney was cutting back film production which would hit its video operations.

A 3.08 million sale at 509p also contributed to a 15p fall to 513p.

KTZ improved 11p to 983 as the copper market appeared more stable and Johnson Matthey, the metals group, eased 20p to 630p as SBC Warburg in a bought deal, took on 9.9 per cent stake from Mincoro, the South African

group. It was unclear whether Warburg managed to place all the shares at its 625p asking price.

The latest round in the supermarket hostilities left Tesco off 5.5p to 300.5p. Asda, which also had to contend with the added setback over its drug price battle, lost 1.5p to 118.25p.

Cable & Wireless rose 9p to 420p following the flotation of Asia Satellite Communications in Hong Kong; its 33 per cent has been cut to 23 per cent, netting £60m.

Greens King, the English brewer, splashing out £197.5m for The Magic Pub Co, rose 24p to 692p.

Fibernet, planning a national high-speed network, produced a wire-humming debut, touching 139p and settling at 131p against a 100p issue price.

But Carnell, the travel publisher from the Nigel Way stable, was a disappointment

falling to reach its 27p suspension price. The company, now called Columbus, closed at 23p.

Bardon, the aggregates group which had attracted considerable speculative interest in the past, held at 38.75p. A US investment house, Twenty Browne, has acquired a 3.4 per cent.

Mayflower, a specialist engineer, fell 13.5p to 108.5p as its ambitious £172m takeover of the US Pullman group, was abandoned following a rival offer.

Manchester Utd continued to dip, reflecting last week's batch of director share sales. The price rose 24p to 692p.

Andrews Sykes, the air conditioning group, continued to benefit from the hot weather, rising 13p to a 433p peak. The shares were 198p a year ago.

TAKING STOCK

□ Details are due this week of the flotation of London & Edinburgh Publishing, producing commemorative brochures for such events as this week's Royal Ascot.

Around £1.5m is being raised through the sale of 30 per cent of the company. L&E is also deeply involved in event advertising and is thinking of running a duty-free shopping service on the Internet. John East & Partners and Fiske & Co are handling the flotation which is expected to value the company at around £4.5m.

□ A De Gruchy, running Jersey's top department store, continues to attract attention. Merchant Retail Group, which operates the Jolliplex stores, has acquired another 136,400 shares, lifting its stake to 24.09 per cent. De Gruchy, unchanged at 195p, has said it wants to talk to MRG.

Category	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Yield	PER	Index
Alcoholic Beverages	Adnams	495.7	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 100
	BrewDog	512	+1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 250
	Brands	445.7	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 350
	Carling	445.7	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	SEAQ VOLUME
	Diageo	445.7	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	Gilts Index
Bank, Merchant	ABN Amro	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 100
	Barclays	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 250
	BNP Paribas	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 350
	Citibank	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	SEAQ VOLUME
	Deutsche Bank	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	Gilts Index
Bank, Retail	ABN Amro	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 100
	Barclays	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 250
	BNP Paribas	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 350
	Citibank	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	SEAQ VOLUME
	Deutsche Bank	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	Gilts Index
Brewer, Pub & Rest.	AVN Amro	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 100
	Heublein	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 250
	Heublein	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 350
	Heublein	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	SEAQ VOLUME
	Heublein	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	Gilts Index
Brewery, Pub & Rest.	Heublein	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 100
	Heublein	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 250
	Heublein	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 350
	Heublein	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	SEAQ VOLUME
	Heublein	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	Gilts Index
Building/Construction	Amico	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 100
	Amico	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 250
	Amico	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 350
	Amico	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	SEAQ VOLUME
	Amico	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	Gilts Index
Electricity	Anglo American	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 100
	Anglo American	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 250
	Anglo American	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 350
	Anglo American	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	SEAQ VOLUME
	Anglo American	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	Gilts Index
Engineering	Admiral	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 100
	Admiral	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 250
	Admiral	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 350
	Admiral	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	SEAQ VOLUME
	Admiral	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	Gilts Index
Electronics	Acorn Computer	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 100
	Acorn Computer	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 250
	Acorn Computer	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 350
	Acorn Computer	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	SEAQ VOLUME
	Acorn Computer	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	Gilts Index
Food Manufacturers	Acorn Comp	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 100
	Acorn Comp	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 250
	Acorn Comp	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 350
	Acorn Comp	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	SEAQ VOLUME
	Acorn Comp	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	Gilts Index
Extractive Industries	Anglo American	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 100
	Anglo American	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 250
	Anglo American	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 350
	Anglo American	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	SEAQ VOLUME
	Anglo American	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	Gilts Index
Engineering Vehicles	Admiral	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 100
	Admiral	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 250
	Admiral	274	-1.1	100	4.5	10.5	FT-SE 350
	Admiral	274</					

Equity rules: Producer condemns eccentric decision as leading actor fails to land Broadway role because he lacks 'star status'

Why Gammon isn't big enough for States

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Arts Correspondent

Michael Gambon has been refused permission to recreate a West End role on Broadway because Americans do not consider him a big enough star; it emerged yesterday.

The National Theatre had hoped to transfer Robert Fox's production of David Hare's play *Skylight*, about an affair between a restaurateur and a radical young teacher, to New York with Gambon in the lead role.

But, following talks, American Equity has refused to let Gambon perform, arguing that the actor who played the lead in Dennis Potter's *The Singing Detective* is of insufficient "star status".

Its prohibition was confirmed by a spokeswoman at the National Theatre, where Gambon played the part of Tom Sergeant when *Skylight* opened last year. American Equity, the American actors' union, to comment on the decision described by Mr Fox as "eccentric".

Complicated rules presided over by the actors' union mean it can be extremely difficult for British actors to play in America if, like Gambon, they are not passed under the star status rule.

Producers are then obliged to prove that there is no American actor who can replace him or her in the part in question by carrying out auditions throughout the country.

The only alternative is for an actor to go to America under the exchange scheme, which allows an American actor of similar status to play in Britain in a straight swap.

Those who have previously fallen foul of Equity's perception of their star status (or otherwise) in America include Juliet Stevenson, who could not take her lead role in *Death and the Maiden* to New York, and Billie Whitelaw – despite her unique position as Beckett's muse.

Michael Pennington was also



Lacking status: Michael Gambon appearing in the West End production of David Hare's *Skylight*, which he will not be able to recreate on Broadway. Photograph: Stuart Morris

not deemed a big enough star, and missed the chance to act in Shaffer's *Gift of the Gorgon* on Broadway. Meanwhile, those who have been allowed include Elaine Paige, Tom Courtenay, and Vanessa Redgrave.

Such decisions raise the controversial question of what exactly is a star. Equity in Britain, which applies the same rule in reverse to American actors, admits it has never written a definition.

"It's impossible to say," admits Peter Finch, who heads Equity's theatre department. "It's often obvious, but if there's an element of doubt we would apply criteria such as what work that person has done, whether they have played in more than one country; and if so, which countries, and which theatre companies."

Jeff Kaye, European bureau chief of the entertainment industry paper the *Hollywood Reporter*, notes that British actors and actresses have been inhibited by traditionally being stereotyped into certain roles:

the upper-class twit (a la Hugh Grant), the suave gentleman (Sean Connery's James Bond) or the evil villain (Alan Rickman).

"Michael Gambon rated 22 out of 100 in our star power list of the most bankable actors and actresses for last year," he added. "That's pretty low. Other Brits did far better. Kenneth Branagh was at 74, Sean Connery was at 94, and Hugh Grant was 81."

Stardom also differs in the worlds of theatre and film. Hol-

lywood is about looks; the stage gets seen in movies where he plays parts more to do with hack-work – like Julia Roberts' father in the film *Mary Reilly*.

"Theatre is much more about the quality of the actor because that's part of the experience of going to the theatre," said Nick James, deputy editor of the film magazine *Sight and Sound*. "In cinema it's to do with glamour rather than talent."

Gambon rose to prominence in the English theatre as a marvellous stage performer, and that's enough on the English stage. But in the States he

gets seen in movies where he plays parts more to do with hack-work – like Julia Roberts' father in the film *Mary Reilly*.

The problem is that any definition of what makes a star cannot include the imponderable quality which lifts a lead actor into a household name. That is an elusive mix of track record, personality, marketing, looks, evocability, quotient, bankability and love life.

Emma Thompson, for example, seems to lack the enviable quotient, partly a result of her jolly-hockey-sticks looks. Daniel Day-Lewis, however, has a hooliganically tragic appearance which fits the bill. The jury is still out on Kate Winslet: her looks and films so far are a plus, but her youth and naivete may prove a problem.

Of course, early death always

helps in the quest for entertainmeant's holy grail. The ultimate star remains Marilyn Monroe, who combined a mysterious demise with an affair with the President, breathtaking looks and a tragic childhood.



Vanessa Redgrave in *Orpheus Descending* was accepted in the US because both Equities (UK and US) accept such "star" performers without demur.



American Equity denied Billie Whitelaw star status; even though she was acting in plays Samuel Beckett wrote for her.



Sir Peter Hall's revival of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* recently met the same fate. Alan Bates, its Soho, was acceptable to Equity but its wife, Victoria Hamilton, was simply a brilliant newcomer and thus taboo.

Car park in a courtyard to be a riverside art gallery

DAVID LISTER

Cars parked by Inland Revenue staff are to be banned from one of London's premier cultural sites, as part of the process of turning it into a riverside art gallery and courtyard for tourists.

The decision urged on the Government by Lord Rothschild, chairman of the Na-

tional Heritage Memorial Fund, marks a victory for the long-running *Independent* campaign to free key areas of cultural importance from parked cars and open them up for tourists and other visitors to walk through.

The courtyard, designed by the 18th-century architect Sir William Chambers, was one of the focal points of the *Independent* campaign to have parked cars removed from cultural spaces, but Inland Rev-

enue staff were reluctant to move. However, by the end of the year they will be forced to park elsewhere or use public transport.

The Government has agreed that the Lord Chancellor's department will move from the river-fronting south block of Somerset House, and the building will be turned into a new art gallery to house the £75m Gilbert Collection of silver, gold, micro-mosaics and gold boxes. The river terrace will transform the building, currently housing divorce courts, into one of Britain's most prestigious art spaces.

The move to allow visitors to wander through the courtyard area also signals a new will. Lord Rothschild said: "I fervently hope that through the Heritage Lottery Fund some of the hidden historic open spaces in London become available for the public's enjoyment, in line with the *Independent* campaign. The Heritage Lottery Fund is able to ensure that cars will no longer be parked in the Great Quadrangle so that this great and long-neglected urban open space can once again be enjoyed by the public."

The Heritage Lottery Fund, which Lord Rothschild chairs, has agreed to offer a grant of £15.5m to help refurbish and fit out the Terrace Building as well as putting up funds to endow the Gilbert Collection.

The *Independent* campaign to remove parked cars from important cultural locations also targeted London's Royal Academy, off Piccadilly. The RA has also agreed that cars should be removed from its frontage.

Other targets of the campaign were the forecourt of the British Museum, and Horse Guards Parade – venue for the Trooping Of The Colour where civil servants' cars are parked.

Neither of these two sites has yet been cleared for pedestrians.

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Meridian

Gross % Net %

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£10,000+ 0.95% 12.0%

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Per Annum APR %

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£50,000+	5.00	4.00
£25,000+	4.75	3.80
£10,000+	4.35	3.48

THE INDEPENDENT

Summer of sport

Wednesday 19 June 1996

Blanc and Loko combine to wreak revenge on Stoichkov's dispirited cohorts



Top of the world: Laurent Blanc (centre) rises highest to greet the crowd after scoring France's first goal in their 3-1 win over Bulgaria at St James' Park yesterday

Photograph by Graham Chadwick/Allsport

France banish the ghost of Bulgaria to reach last eight

France, still burning with indignation at the part Bulgaria played in their failure to reach the World Cup finals of 1994, gained revenge at St James' Park yesterday to ensure they finished top of Group B. The blow proved to be a fatal one for Bulgaria, who were denied a place in the last eight because of Spain's win over Romania 90 miles away at Elland Road.

The day began with any two of three teams capable of reaching the quarter-finals, but Spain prevailed at Leeds to finish with five points. That was one more than the Bulgarians, who will no doubt reflect on the Hristo Stoichkov "goal" that was wrongly disallowed for offside against the Spanish.

Stoichkov was implicated in further controversy after the match when one of his opponents, Marcel Desailly, accused him of racism. "In the first 20 minutes he made racist comments towards me and other

African players in our team," he said. "I do not consider Stoichkov to be a great player any more and I don't take anything from my battle with him. He was saying black this and black that."

Stoichkov replied: "It's normal, if you took a microphone on to the pitch you would find it was happening everywhere."

Departure from the tournament was a harsh outcome for Bulgaria, although they could have no complaints about the result of this match. Stoichkov, apart from attack looked leaden and clumsy compared to the nimble French.

The Parma striker, almost inevitably, got the Bulgarian goal that would prove a consolation buried by the French strikes from Laurent Blanc, an own goal by Luboslav Penev, and Patrice Loko. In the closing moments, Stoichkov stood on his own in the half-way line, totally uninterested in the proceedings.

"We were punished for our mistakes," Dimiter Penev, the Bulgarian coach, said, "but despite this defeat I still feel my team has done well. France have paid us back now."

BULGARIA 1 FRANCE 3

Stoichkov (69 min)	Blanc (21 min)
Half-time: 0-1	Penev (63 min)
Attendance at St James' Park: 26,976	Loko (90 min)

BOOKMAKERS

Guy Hodgson

in Paris. From the lusty singing of "La Marseillaise" beforehand to the crunching foul Desailly inflicted on Stoichkov in the third minute, it was clear they were highly motivated.

This energy was nearly snuffed

as early in the 13th minute,

Borisov Mikhailov diving low

to his left to tip Youri Djorkaeff's free-kick round the post.

It proved to be a temporary reprieve, however, because seven

minutes later Djorkaeff floated

over a corner from the right that

Blanc met emphatically with his

head, thumping the ball between

Mikhailov and Emil Kremenski.

(CSKA Sofia) to Galakov, 81.

BULGARIA (4-4-2): Nikolov (Reading); Kremenski (Olympique Marseille); Ivanov (Rapid Vienna); Hubchev (Hamburg); Tsvetanov (Waldhof Mannheim); Lechov (Hamburg); Yankov (Bayern Leverkusen); Yordanov (Sporting Lisbon); Galakov (VfB Stuttgart); Stoichkov (Parma); Penev (Atletico Madrid). Substitutes: Bozhinov (1860 Munich) for Yankov, 78; Donkov (CSKA Sofia) for Galakov, 81.

FRANCE (4-3-2-1): Lame (Paris St-Germain); Thuram (Parma), Blanc (Barcelona), Desailly (Milan), Lizarazu (Bordeaux); Karembeu (Sampdoria), Deschamps (Lorient), Guerin (Paris St-Germain); Zidane (Borussia), Djorkaeff (Real Madrid); Dugarry (Milan). Substitutes: Pedro (Nantes) for Zidane, 61; Leterrier (Paris St-Germain) for Dugarry, 69.

BOOKMAKERS: Maroc (England) replaced by P. Durkin (England), 27. **Man of the match:** Djorkaeff.

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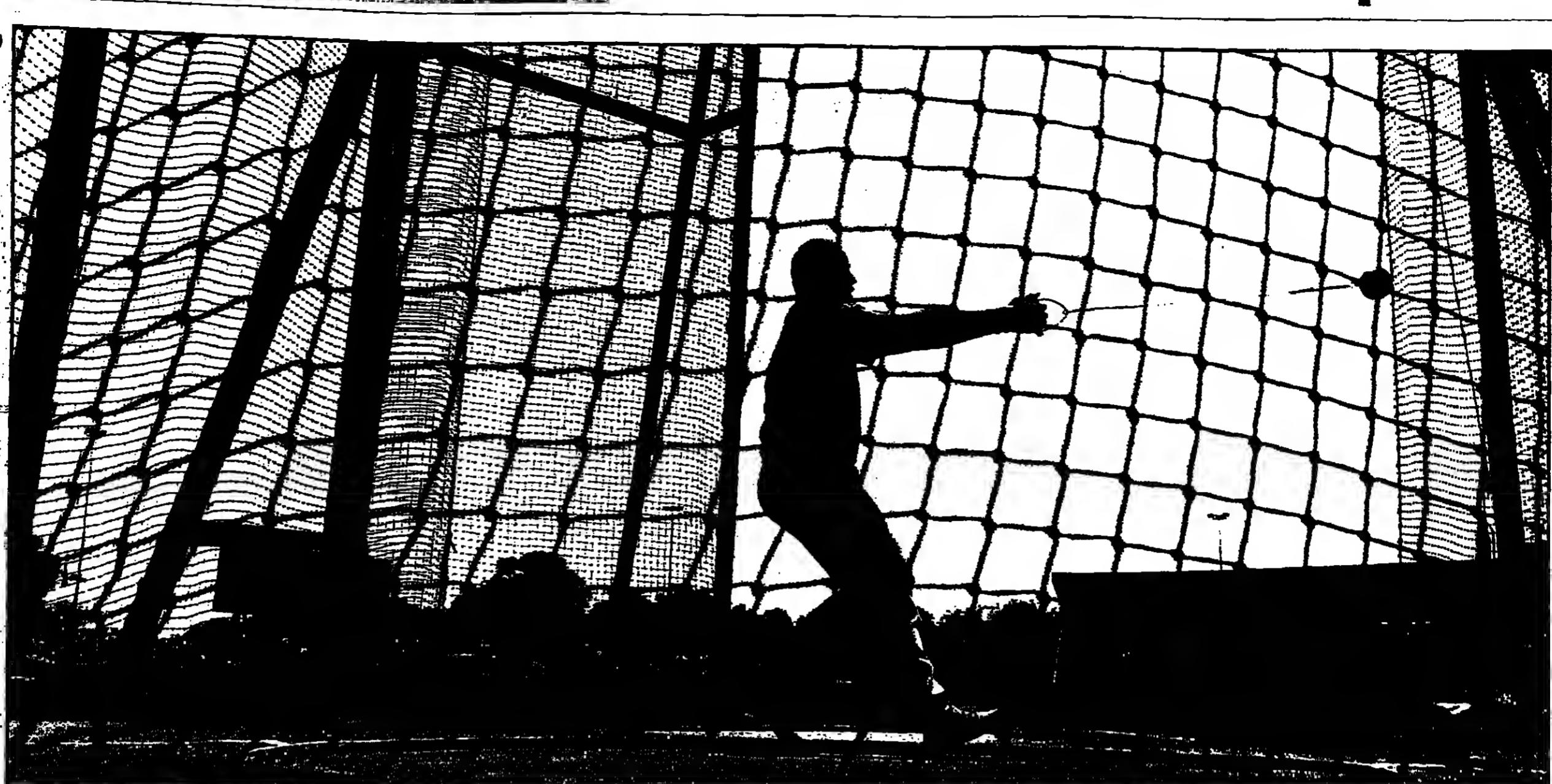
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INSIDE TODAY'S 12-PAGE SECTION

WAITING FOR WIMBLEDON **THE ART OF THE SPIN BOWLER**
Bob Clegg on why Andre Agassi (left) may yet surprise his critics
Laurie Pigeon bids farewell to No 1 court

The professional's view
Pat Nevin on Euro 96

A day at the races
Richard Edmondson, Greg Wood and Serena Mackesy on the first day of Royal Ascot



Hammer and tongs: The muscles on these men were incredible, pecs like melons, sides of beef for shoulders - and they were only the supporters

Photograph: Robert Hallam

Who is Mick Jones?

BEING THERE

Much of the drama at the Olympic trials did not make the headlines.

The hammer, for instance.

Jonathan Rendall tells the tale

You're really going to do something on the hammer? Oh, that's great," Malcolm said. "No one ever does anything on the hammer. I was in the hammer myself, actually, but I was too small, that's what it came down to." Malcolm was now a press officer for the three A's. We were standing in the half-empty Alexandra Stadium at the start of finals day, a time of wild hopes, soon to be followed for many by the broken dreams of an Atlanta-less summer; well, for the men's hammer throwers, the virtual guarantee of one.

"Any hammer thrower you could recommend?" I asked Malcolm. "I don't know, bit of a character maybe?" "Er, Smithy's bound to win it. I mean, he usually does, Dave does. But the one you really want is Mick Jones. He's a real character. And his coach, Alan Bircham. He's the same. Alan Bircham trained me, actually. Both of them are real characters."

Malcolm told me the hammer followers always sat in the same seats in the stand behind the hammer cage. There wouldn't be many of them. Once I got there, I'd probably recognise Alan Bircham straight away. He'd be the balding man, wearing a brightly-coloured shirt no doubt, shouting louder than anyone else and cracking jokes. And Mick Jones, well, you couldn't miss him. After the event was over, they'd go and sit in the stand with the hammer followers. They always did. They liked to stick together.

A pleasant light breeze fluttered the pages of stats lying around the press room. Mick Jones' personal best 72.10 metres. And that wasn't this year. The Olympic qualifying standard was 74. Dave Smith had done 75.10. Paul Head had gone further than Mick Jones, too. He'd done 74.02, but that was some time ago. It looked as though the Olympic place was all but Dave Smith's already.

The athletics writers were just unpacking their gear, chatting idly. Only the hammer was going on. The big events weren't on for two or three hours. Did you hear about Linford yesterday? Paid a visit to the press room, apparently. It looked like war, but it ended in handshakes. Unbelievable. Typical Linford. You should have been there. Du'aice Ladejo? He's talking

it up a hit, isn't he? You've got to fancy Roger for the 400.

They were an affable bunch, really looking forward to the big races with the residual enthusiasm of fanhood. Not like some of the football writers with their I-could-be-a-manager Umbro puffed jackets. Yeah, saw him down at Scribes last night, didn't I. You wonder why Christie gets so het up about the athletics writers. They weren't the ones who wrote the lunchbox stuff.

I walked around the stadium towards the hammer followers' stand. Outside, the fans were arriving and picnicking on the grass before they went in: middle-aged white couples with "I support British athletics" T-shirts, carrying little Union Jacks, the ones you've always seen on television in some distant foreign stadium through the years, waving their flags at Daley, Sch, Sally, Linford, picnicking in the sun next to black guys in

The hammer followers' stand looked like a convention for Security Personnel International

sunglasses, and schoolchildren of all colours scampering about with autograph books. A gentle, idyllic consciousness infused the air. Oh gosh, I'm not taking up all your shade am I? No, man, you carry on, everything's sweet. It must be the only unmanufactured, one-nation British sport, athletics.

Things were slightly different in the hammer followers' stand, however. In fact, it looked like a convention for Security Personnel International. Scanning around for Alan Bircham, I couldn't tell who was balding or not because they all seemed to be sporting close crops and baseball caps. They were all peering grimly out at the hammer cage from under the peaks of the caps. The muscles on these men were incredible, pecs like melons, sides of beef for shoulders. And they were only the supporters. No one was discernably cracking jokes. There was just

the staccato murmur of stats. "When was Paul Head did the 74.02? '94 was it?"

I spotted Mick Jones immediately. Number 11, prowling around by the cage some 30 yards away. Only the photographers and the elderly officials were allowed around the cage, apart from the hammer throwers themselves. Jones was an amiable-looking giant of a man with carrot-coloured suede-head crop. He looked like how you imagined Lemmy from *Of Mice and Men* would look, with a touch of Gordon Ferris, the former British heavyweight champ from Ulster. In

Jones was bigger than the other throwers, but with the suspicion of a belly. Between throws, he wandered up and down the grass strip by the cage, wincing and talking to himself. He was a man who wore his emotions on his sleeve. Dave Smith was almost as big but trimmer. He was clearly following some psychological battle-plan. He had a synchronised warm-up routine and put his baseball cap on between throws. He was already in the lead, 72.58. Ahead, but not safe. Paul Head was smaller and swarthier. He eschewed both the meticulous psychological build-up of Smith and the emotionalism of Jones. He just hung around between throws and then got on with it.

Time was running out to catch Smith. They were on their fourth throw out of five. Head and Jones went after Smith, so at least they knew what they had to throw. Most of the hammer followers wanted Jones to win, you could tell. The murmuring reached a mini-crescendo when he swung round on

the grass strip to face the cage and take his turn, and it was interspersed with a sort of affectionate semi-chortling, hoping he'd come good, like England football fans watching Gazza, or a microscopic scale. "Mick's got to go past his PB, y'know - 72.10. Come on, Mick."

Jones wiped the sweat from his forehead, then whirled round and let out a grunting yell as he released the hammer. It glided up and away into the blue above the stadium stands, but already Jones was shaking his head. He didn't like it. He shook his head and stamped off. He was still third, behind Head and Smith. This time he took an extended walk up the grass strip. He must have gone 70 yards. He went as far as a photographer who was perched there. You could see Jones talking, but from that range it wasn't clear whether he was talking to the photographer or to himself.

Smith took his last throw. He went through his warm-up but still looked tense. He wanted a throw that would put him safe.

The hammer arched purposefully but then fell away. Smith was bent double in disappointment. Now they could still catch him. But then Head threw and was gruffly tearing off the number from his vest before the hammer had landed.

Only Jones was left. A matronly figure with grey hair in a white dress handed Jones the silver orb. Jones dangled its chain from his huge fingers like a yo-yo. He took up a position 40 yards from the cage and stared at it intently. For how many endless hours had Jones and Alan Bircham prepared for just such a moment? He walked back to

the hammer cage.

Smith stood there beaming at the athletics writers. But they were looking at the track

wards it with his shoulders thrown back. The hammer exploded out from the cage. Jones liked it. The glare from the sun meant you couldn't see exactly where it had gone, but Jones had a good feeling. He punched the air and up the grass strip his gall acquired a swagger. Jones raised his arms to the almost completely unreciprocal crowd. At least the hammer followers knew what was going on. Jones, what a showman.

We waited for the MC to announce the result of the throw over the tannoy - 71.22. An improvement, but not enough for Atlanta. For a second, a hollow look crossed Jones's face. But then he shrugged and gave a rueful smile. Jones, Head and Smith exchanged Mafia-style handshakes. The MC interviewed Smith over the tannoy. Smith said he was "quietly confident" of reaching the final in Atlanta. "Good for you, Smithy, good for you," one of the baseball

of the hammer throwers!" the official said. Yes, I said, but not Dave Smith, it was Mick Jones. "Mick who?" the official said.

I went down to the changing-rooms and asked the doorman, "Oi, Mick!" he shouted. "Someone wants you!" But there a diminutive figure in a blazer shuffled out. He must have been about 50. "Sorry, mate," the doorman said, "I don't know any Mick Joneses apart from Mick here."

By now 'hor' an hour had passed. The stadium was packed. People were massed on the grassy verge opposite the stands, waiting to see Christie, Gunnell, Black and Ladejo. All the bodies blocked out the breeze. You had to stand on the steps outside the press room to get any air. Mick Jones's name had been on the tannoy four times. As well as Malcolm, the other two three A's press officers were engaged in the search for Jones.

Some of the athletics writers were starting to get suspicious. What exactly did I want with this hammer thrower? "Perhaps he's at doping control?" one said quizzically. No, I said, it was nothing like that. I just wanted a chat. "What was his name again?" another asked.

"Mick Jones."

I told Malcolm and the other press officers to call off the search. It wasn't fair on them. They looked relieved. I decided to walk round the stadium one last time. Maybe I'd run into him. Well, you couldn't miss him. The deserted hammer cage loomed at one end of the stadium, a monstrous anachronism blotting out the track stars with its steel struts. I wonder if they've ever considered putting a sheet over it for decorum's sake.

The hammer followers were still there, discussing hammer technique while the 3,000m steeplechase sped past. "I kept telling him to push it in," one of them was saying, grinding his heel into the floor of the stand as if it were a hammer circle. "Push it in, I told him. But he didn't, the lad." "Maybe he was Alan Bircham?" But no. Well, anyway, did he know where Mick Jones had gone?

"Ah, now Mick," he said warmly. "Knowing Mick, he's probably gone home. Mick's the sort of bloke who could actually just do that."

The mourning after Italy's night of misery

It's been a beautiful few days in Italy, all blue skies and cool evenings.

Can football really be this important to Italians? Yes, it can. The attitude towards Arrigo Sacchi, the team coach who dropped his two most successful players, Gianfranco Zola and Pier Luigi Casiraghi, from the starting line-up against the Czech Republic, has been little short of murderous. Saturday's *Cortile dello Sport* headlined its front page: "Sacchi, you asked for this" and, in common with the rest of the press, tore apart his handling of the game step by step.

Luigi Apolloni, the Parma defender sent off for two yellow cards after an indifferent performance, has been branded public enemy number one. The silver-haired Fabrizio Ravanelli, the Juventus striker, is in the doghouse, too, because he clearly wasn't up to peak fitness on the night. And so the post-mortems have gone on, uncompromising and full of righteous indignation.

To this distinctly lukewarm follower of the game, football seems lower than the worst in Italy, turning the country into a nation of

SPORT IN ANOTHER COUNTRY

Defeat has sent a nation into shock.

Andrew Gumbel

reports from Rome

petulant teenagers who want everything to go their way all the time and grow instantly bolshy when the slightest hitch holds them up. Their moments of joy are suspiciously over-confident, their lows all slavering self-pity and melodramatic recrimination.

Reading the sports press, one phrase pops inevitably into my head: *grow up*. Don't take it all so seriously. OK, so the team screwed up, but that doesn't mean the whole country has to go on hold. Actually, I've been

taking perverse pleasure in arguing Sacchi's side of the story. After all, it's not so long ago that he was lionised as the architect of Italy's glorious victory in their opening game against Russia.

Of course he had to hold Zola and Casiraghi back, I say; neither was in top physical form and their energies needed to be spared. Zola was still recovering from dysentery and Casiraghi had complained of stomach cramps in training. Yes, it was fine leaving the field without a top-flight defender after Apolloni was sent off – after all, the Italian side had struggled through far worse with 10 men before. As for the decision to play Ravanelli at less than top form, well, he had gone on to the field for Juventus in the European Cup final against Ajax last month in a similar condition and played like a dream. The fact that he didn't do the same last Friday was just bad luck.

As Sacchi himself has said: if his tactical manoeuvres had worked out, he would have been a hero. So it seems churlish and immature to blame him because the team did not live up to his expectations. The

truth is that football is a team effort. "When we win, we are all good. When we lose, the fault is collective." Go, Arrigo, sock it to them.

And so to tonight's challenge against Germany. There is a saying in Italy that the national football team always messes up when things are going well but pulls out the stops when the pressure is on. Right now, that dictum is the only thing keeping this manic-depressive excuse for a country from slipping its collective wrists. When Germany walked all over Russia on Sunday night, the reaction around here was akin to an epileptic convulsion.

If Italy win, I will have to put up with another nauseating outpouring of self-congratulatory glee. My footie-mad friends won't forgive me for saying so, but I'll be much happier if they lose. It'll bring this crazy national psychosis to a rapid, if brutal close. I know the country will get over it, just like it recovered from its ignominious early exit from the Mexico World Cup 10 years ago. And in the meantime, I can look forward to having the beach to myself this weekend.

SPORTING VERNACULAR

No 2 BOTTLE

"I am never going to get revenge on Mr van Basten," said Tony Adams in an interview yesterday, as he has bottled it and retired.

This seemed a little unfair to Mr van Basten, who could be forgiven for thinking that he had left the field as the victor, but whatever is justice, the remark testifies again to the perceived importance of "bottle" as a component in a winning psychology.

Its origins are a little obscure. Partridge notes several slang and underworld uses for the term, none of which gives an entirely clear derivation. "No bottle" could be used to mean "no good" or "useless" in the early part of this century, but that dismissive sense doesn't quite square with its on-pitch meaning, where it refers to a very specific disability – the distal absence of confrontational bravery or nerve. A player might possess every physical skill required, but if he lacks bottle, he will be unable to deploy them when things get rough. A more likely

etymology is to be found in its use as rhyming slang for "arse" (bottle and glass), a meaning that suggests a colloquially honoured connection between courage and control of the sphincter muscles. To lose your bottle may just be a marginally more decorous version of "bricking it". These are murky waters, though – in prison slang, to be "at the bottle" or a "bottle-merchant" is to be a predatory homosexual, so there is perhaps some dim memory of sexual submission in the term.

It seems most likely that it is a verbal pitch invasion – making its way into footballing talk from the terraces of the Seventies, as the game itself becomes more physically aggressive and less gentlemanly. There is no suggestion anywhere, incidentally, that it has any connection with the idea of Dutch courage or alcoholic valour, though in that sense the England team might be said to have too much "bottle" altogether.

Thomas Sutcliffe

6 coming soon...wimbledon



Whitaker returns as an eager native
THE WEEK AHEAD

No 1 for all the hits

No more do I hear the sweet sound of white tennis balls flying from wooden rackets. No more do Joan Hunter Dunn sit around in Ted Tinling dresses with the odd peep of lace beneath. No more do men of grace blow kisses to pretty faces in the crowd; instead, they throw sweat-soaked shirts into a forest of eager arms.

These changes to Wimbledon came slowly, almost imperceptibly, but at the end of this year's Championships, the original Court No 1 will be obsolete. Eventually, the bulldozers will move in and in one mechanical swoop will reduce Court No 1 to a pile of anonymous rubble, to be dumped who-knows-where. Memories are not so easily demolished.

Although it did not have a Royal Box and was destined to be a semi-detached poor relation to the mansion next door, Court No 1 had a life and an atmosphere of its own. Seldom did a day's play pass that the great cheers of its loyal devotees did not echo around the Centre Court, and make 12,000 people think that they were in the wrong place.

They often were, and never more so than in the first Championships after the war in 1946. The frustration must have been excruciating as they sat in their seats and listened to the rapturous applause from the place next door. For it was on Court No 1 that the sad-faced Jaroslav Drobny, whose native Czechoslovakia was only just free from occupation, was beating the clean-cut US Marine Jack Kramer.

The American had conceded only five games on his way to the fourth round, was the No 2 seed and the public favourite to take the title at his first attempt. After one of the most thrilling matches played on any court, Drobny won by 2-6, 17-15, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3. The drama was not confined to the power produced from Drobny's left arm, for the change of ends it was obvious that Kramer was in serious trouble.

He was suffering from an injured hand. What started with small blisters had developed into a raw wound by the end of the 32-game second set. There were no chairs on court, no two-minute rest periods in those days, so at each opportunity Kramer smacked a few forbidden seconds to try to soften the path with sticking plasters. Al-

lthough he made no excuses and merely said that the best man on the day had won.

In my demob suit, and green pork-pie hat with a red feather, this was my first Wimbledon as a Fleet Street junior reporter, and I had been consigned to Court No 1.

Seeing "things" were happening, I left

my press seat and got myself a place behind the umpire's chair, where I could see Kramer's plight and almost feel his pain. I wrote my story full of blood, guts, colour and quotes. I was proud of what was to be my first big Wimbledon byline, but when I showed my copy to my sports editor, who had been on the Centre Court, he said: "Sonny, this is too good for you," and with a few minor changes it appeared in the paper next morning under his name. Kramer and I learned a lot that day.

Although the court was a semi-detached poor relation to the mansion next door, it had a life and an atmosphere of its own

bles twice, all the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune were forgotten and Court No 1 was in love with him again. It was a roaring, boisterous, bellowing love when Michael Stich he returned on the third Monday to finish his doubles final.

When play had stopped at 9.22pm on Sunday night, the score stood at 13-13 in the final set after four and a half hours of play. Although the match could have ended in a few minutes, many McEnroe fans queued all night for the finish. When their final resumed against Jim Grabb and Richey Rennerberg, the court was full to its 7,500 capacity, with everyone getting in free of charge.

Ten more games were played in 34 minutes before McEnroe and Stich won 5-7, 7-6, 3-6, 7-6, 19-17. The total of 83 games in five hours, one minute was a record for a Wimbledon doubles final. In response to the crowd, McEnroe and Stich repeated their lap of honour, and the biggest cheer came when John offered the trophy to his son, who was at court side with his mother, Tatian O'Neal. A moment poignant for a couple who were soon to part.

Boris Becker's memories of Court No 1 in 1987 are "richt so schön", and it was probably his own fault. At 19, he had twice won the Championships and he was up against Peter Doohan, a little-fancied Australian whom he had defeated with ease at Queen's Club a couple of weeks previously.

Doohan didn't fancy his chances, either. He was staying at the local YMCA and had booked his flight out of England, but, like all good Aussies, he loved a fight when the stakes were high. Rain had delayed this second round match until Friday afternoon.

At first, Becker seemed to be a victim of his own arrogance, which hardly endeared him to the crowd, who hungered for a big upset.

And they got it, for the fiery, acrobatic German was beaten 7-6, 4-6, 6-2,

6-4, and the roar of the crowd echoed around an envious Centre Court. Afterwards, still angry Becker told the world's

press: "Of course I am disappointed, but

I didn't lose a war. There is no one dead; it was just a tennis match."

There were not too many tears shed for Becker, but I must admit there was a hint of a Puccini drama when Chrissy Evert was beaten 6-1, 7-6 by Kathy Jordan in the third round. It was the first time in 111 Wimbledons that she failed to reach the semi-finals. The sun did not shine on Court No 1 that day and her unexpected exit made the place seem a little duller and a little greyer. The year was 1983.

Chrissy is not a Mimi and not quite a Musetta. Watching from the sideline, and at times almost close enough to touch her, I felt as if I were in a world of bad dreams.

I had seen her lose before, but this time she was a thin ghost of the player normally feared by her contemporaries. She looked pale and frail, yet offered no word of excuse, only praise for Miss Jordan. Afterwards, we discovered that she had been ill during the night and a doctor had to be called out at 2am.

Even before the South African Billie Tapscott shocked Wimbledon in 1927 by appearing on court minus stockings, fashion has always been a feature of lawn tennis, and the most glamorous of all events was the now defunct Wightman Cup. This annual match between the British and American women was played on Court No 1 from 1946 to 1972.

Andrew Lloyd Webber could have written a musical about it. Monet could have painted it in three shades of light and Shelter would have certainly composed an ode about it, for the great West Open Starr which over the years grew taller and taller was festooned with colour and was a wonderful sight to behold.

There were rows upon rows of girls in summer uniform dresses; some schools in pink, others in blue, or green, or yellow or lilac. There were panama hats galore, and a few battered boaters beside, but all wore regulation white socks and "sensible" shoes.

They may have looked like a wall of in-

nocent flowers reaching up to that tent of blue, but once they were out of reach of their games mistresses, and play began, decorum was replaced by such a cacophony of screams of delight that local residents might have thought that pig-sticking had come to SW19. Their enthusiasm was so infectious that those in the posh seats joined in and felt young again.

Baron de Coubertin's aristocratic and now completely ignored Olympic creed of

it being more important to take part than to win might have been penned for the British teams, for during all those summers on Court No 1, they were only successful in the Wightman Cup on three occasions.

Then the atmosphere was such that I am surprised we didn't all drown in our own euphoria.

When McEnroe had won the singles three times and the doubles twice, all was forgotten and Court No 1 was in love with him again

Never more so than in 1958, when we broke the spell of 28 years of failure and the girl who made it possible was Christine Truman, who won all three of her matches.

Her staggering victory over Althea Gibson after dropping the first set was one of the greatest women's matches played on the court. Christine was 17 and Miss Gibson the reigning Wimbledon champion.

She was the first black champion; powerful, athletic, she played every stroke as if the pride of her African heritage depended upon it. In contrast, Christine, the sweet-heart of British tennis, was never quite sure what the score was and kept bashing her mighty forehand willy-nilly. The innocence of Christine was all too much for the American.

Two years later, Britain again defeated the United States, 4-3. This time Ann Haydon, who as Mrs Jones was to become Wimbledon Champion nine years later, and

Angela Mortimer (the 1961 Champion) were in the winning line-up. By Jove! We could play the game in those golden days. The last successful year on Court No 1 was 1968, when Virginia Wade (the 1977 Centenary Champion) cast aside all her theatrical uncertainties and produced a masterly display of controlled arrogance which, when in full flight, made her one of the most enthralling and at times exasperating players to watch.

At 1-3 on the start of the second day's play, Brian's chances seemed hopeless.

Miss Wade made it 2-3 with her second singles and 3-3 with her doubles with Winnie Shaw. Then came the final dramatic crunch: the Truman sisters, Christine and Nell, against Stephanie DeFina and Kathy Harter. There has never been a match like it nor will there be one like it again. Winners were hit off the wood, outrageous misses clipped the lines, and rallies were so hectic that they might have been playing on hot coals.

At one vital and hilarious point, I dropped and broke my expensive calabash pipe, and in the excitement a man in the far stand had a heart attack and died. Someone was heard to remark: "He might have waited until the change of ends." It was getting dark and damp during that final agonising game during which our dear Christine twice fell flat on the court. The normally solid American girls were bewildered by it all; and the crowd bewitched.

Unlike fading photographs, memories become brighter with age, and I would not swap mine for a fistful of tomorrow's Goodbye, old friend, I hope that your elegant replacement, minus free standing, brings as much pleasure as old Court No 1, a place of so many youthful dreams that bulldozers cannot destroy.

Laurie Pignon reported from Wimbledon for the first time 50 years ago and has not missed a Championship since.

Picture: John McEnroe (left) and Michael Stich celebrate after their epic victory over Richey Rennerberg and Jim Grabb in the 1992 Wimbledon men's doubles final after five hours and one minute's play spread over two days on No 1 Court. **Photograph:** David Ashdown

Can Wimbledon bring the best out of Agassi again?



All right in white: despite Paris, motivation will not be a problem in SW19. Photograph: David Ashdown

As the Big W looms, the Big Wonder is on. What has happened to Andre Agassi?

At the French Open last month, overweight and unmotivated, he was well beaten in the second round by a journeyman called Christopher Woodruff. Sporting his latest look (the Bruce Lipton cueball coiffure), Agassi had died easy, rolled into a side pocket – and he didn't want to talk about it.

Ducking the mandatory press conference brought a \$2,000 fine, but he could not avoid the question that has come to dominate the tennis season: has the Glitz Kid become the Skids Kid?

Thus far, Agassi is having as bad a year as John Major and Bob Dole, as fat as his belly isn't. Search the record for a really good win, and you find one: a January rebound from 0-2 in sets to beat Jim Courier at the Australian Open. Then only to lose despondently to Michael Chang while blaming the wind.

A first-round loss to Luke Jensen at Memphis must have been a dive worthy of Greg Louganis.

Agassi has won one tournament – the Lipton – because the other finalist, Goran Ivanisevic, woke up that day with a neck as inflexible as his on-court thought

processes and quit after a few unproductive swats.

What are the reasons for this mid-term-life malaise? His rival Pete Sampras thinks it dates back nine months to the September afternoon at Flushing Meadow when he deposited Agassi as the US champion, 6-4, 6-3, 4-6, 7-5. Maybe even to "The Point" – their brilliant all-court give-and-take, point-and-counterpoint barrage that Agassi seemed to win several times as it lengthened. Yet it concluded on Sampras's roaring crosscourt backhand on the 19th stroke.

"Andre hasn't been quite the same since then," Sampras said. "Something seemed

to go out of him. But you can't write him off. He's still got the best forehand, the best backhand, the best return of serve that I've been up against."

Pancho Segura, who coached Agassi briefly, shakes his head. "Too much money. It's a shame he's wasting all that talent. For a while, he got it straight, but now he doesn't seem to know what's more important – competitiveness or commercialism. He isn't keeping them in the right perspective."

Not that everyone regards Agassi as in permanent decline. One friend said: "Andre's an every-other-year guy." '92 Wim-

bledon, '94 the Open, and '96 will be big yet." His tailor, the Nike tennis rep Ian Hamilton, agreed. Conceding that Agassi was not ready for Paris, he said: "Andre will come into Wimbledon concentrating. He's one guy I don't worry about here. This is major major. Remember what Wimbledon means to him. They said he'd never win a Grand Slam and in '92 he was the most unlikely of all. Wimbledon. He'll be eager, all right."

Agassi's coach, Brad Gilbert, the author of *Winning Like a Pro*, a how-to tennis treatise, says his pupil is losing ugly in the French Open. "I'm not surprised," he said. "It's a bad day at the office." But Centre Court isn't another office. It's the executive suite.

Agassi, who turned down invitations to the US team in 1988 and 1992, has made much of his desire for an Olympic gold medal, pointing himself toward Atlanta. But, thanks to his early departure from Paris, he's had nearly a month to retool. His trainer, Gil Reyes, says a different Andre will be unveiled when the Championships begin.

We can only wait and wonder. That's the eternal mystique of Andre, he of the showbiz fizz. Even when you can get the boy out of Vegas, you can't get Vegas out of the boy.

AN ENDURING AFFAIR: WHAT AGASSI SAYS AT WIMBLEDON

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Whitaker returns as an eager native

THE WEEK AHEAD

David Byas is not the only Yorkshire-born captain who believes he is leading a side capable of winning the County Championship.

The other is James Whitaker, an exile throughout his professional career, who will not lack motivation when he arrives with his Leicestershire troops at the Park Avenue ground in Bradford tomorrow.

When he agreed last winter to take over from Nigel Briers, the match against Yorkshire was the first he wanted to find in the season's programme. Born in Skipton, Whitaker, 34, recalls frequent trips to the Leeds nets as a precociously talented teenager, encouraged by his father, head of the family's specialist chocolates business, who had no sweeter dream than to see his son defending the county's honour at Headingley.

Unfortunately for Whitaker senior, the boy's talents were not appreciated until he was installed at Uppingham School and making an impression on Leicestershire. He was recommended unhesitatingly to them by their former player Maurice Hallam, who was Uppingham's cricket master.

Divided loyalties can be discounted. Indeed, should he do something memorable over the next few days it would not be the first time he has been inspired to do so in opposition.

In the autumn of 1993, pressed into service by an injury to Briers, he had the good fortune to lead Leicestershire against Yorkshire. Not only was he moved to score his first Championship century for two years, he also plotted a 74-run victory.

He has no doubt he has a side equipped to unseat his native county. "We have a well-balanced team with bags of ability and great spirit," he said. "If you look at our record over the last few seasons we have always been among the leading sides and we are good enough to challenge for the title."

Tomorrow, Leicestershire must manage without Alan Mullally, one of the architects of the 1993 victory, and face a Yorkshire side full of confidence after defeating Warwickshire at Headingley to stretch their Championship lead to 14 points. In their current mood, Michael Bevan, Michael Vaughan and Tony McGrath could take some containing, while Darren Gough is rediscovering his form at just the right time – not quite ready for England and eager to fire for his county.

For their part, the Midlands side need to restore their self-belief after being mauled twice by Surrey, in the Championship, and the Sunday League, in which they were bowled out for 48.

Elsewhere, Kent, whose hopes of keeping Yorkshire within touching distance were frustrated by a resurgent Middlesex at Canterbury, will not win points easily at Warwickshire, who can be expected to react to their second Championship defeat of the season with renewed vigour.

It has taken only a small blip in the champions' normally steady upward graph to bring the individual quality of their players – as opposed to their team – into question, in the past, nothing has motivated them more.

A fascinating encounter is in prospect at Derby, where the home side, forcefully led by Dean Jones and with Devon Malcolm coming out of his understandable slump, begin two points behind third-placed Middlesex.

As a first success, Surrey's defeat of Leicestershire was overdue. They lose Chris Lewis, Graham Thorpe and Alec Stewart but will hope to build on the gain against struggling Durham at Stockton, where they might also give their Sunday League prospects a lift before concentrating on a match with a touch of Euro 96 about it, against the Netherlands in the NatWest Trophy on Tuesday. Jon Culley



Flight of fancy: Min Patel, England's left-arm spinner, practises his art under the watchful gaze of the former England wicket-keeper Alan Knott at Lord's yesterday

Photograph: Howard Boylan

Patel near the end of pilgrimage to Lord's

England's latest left-arm spinner had to wait a long time to get his first taste of Test cricket. Now he is desperate for more. Adam Szerter talked to him

Patel was chosen instead for that winter's A tour to India and Bangladesh. His international career finally seemed to have started, but after an indifferent season last year, he was omitted from the winter's A tour to Pakistan. Now, though, he has finally tasted the real thing.

A fortnight ago, he made his Test debut at Edgbaston for England against India, the country of his birth. Tomorrow, it's Lord's. On Monday, it was Middlesex at the St Lawrence ground and Patel's left arm was ready for a long bowl. In the event, however, Middlesex forced a draw and he drove off in his brand new Renault Laguna, doubtless dreaming about bowling Sachin Tendulkar, first ball, neck and crop.

He is only 25 years old, but it has been a long wait for Minal Patel. After making his first-class debut for Kent when he was 18 and still at Dartford Grammar School, his career has already been interrupted enough times for a less determined mind to wander. First of all, he went to Manchester for three years to gain an economics degree. Then, when he returned, he injured his right knee so badly he was restricted to just a handful of matches in 1993.

The following year was his real breakthrough. He finished as leading wicket-taker in the country, with 90 first-class wickets, and was on the verge of a call-up to the England squad no more than one occasion.

Interestingly, in the light of Raymond Illingworth's comments at the weekend about England needing to select players at 22 or 23, Patel was overlooked. Despite his record, there was a belief that his bowling was slightly too negative and Yorkshire's Richard Steep was preferred.

Patel was born in Bombay and lived there until he was five, when his father decided to move to Ego-

land. "We came, the whole family, lock, stock and barrel. Me and my brothers. My father just felt that we would benefit from a Western education. We initially went to Essex and lived in Ilford for a year, then we settled around the Dartford area.

had Embers [John Embrey] out there, Phil Neal was the manager. John Barclay was the tour manager. That's been my only England tour so far, but if that was anything to go by they should all be brilliant because the atmosphere and the team spirit were fantastic – pretty much like

Like all good craftsmen, Patel strives for perfection, works hard at his technique and welcomes constructive criticism. Perhaps mindful of bowling too negatively, he found last season that he had gone a little far the other way.

"I spoke to Embers midway through last year, and he said I was bowling a bit slower than I had the year before, probably because you could get away with that in India, where the wickets are more helpful.

So I came back and bowled a better pace in the last half of the season.

It wasn't a radical change of action or anything, just changing my pace a little." Patel, as you might expect,

is a finger-spinner, and he said I was

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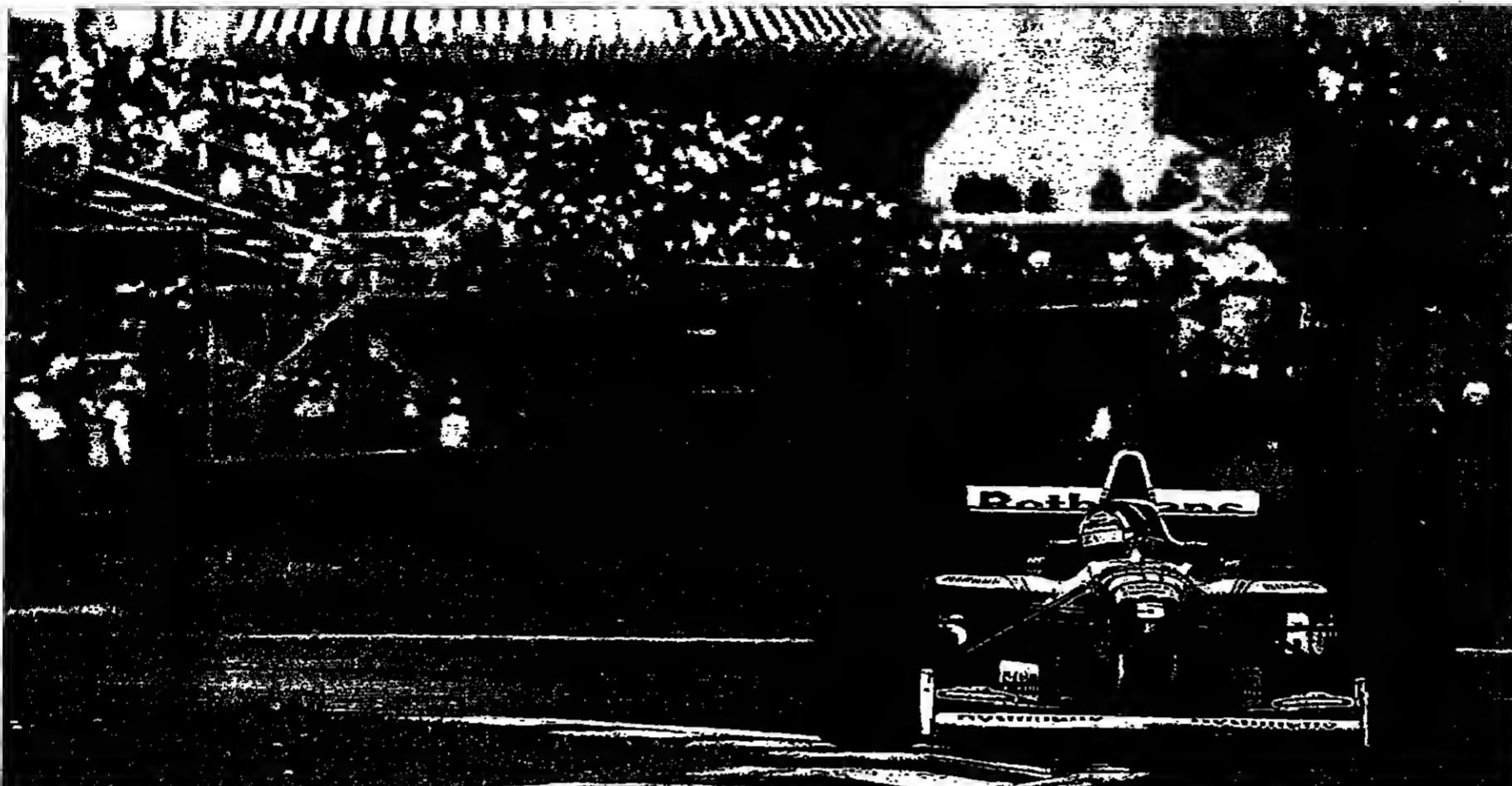
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FORMULA 1 DREAM TEAM



No one else in sight: Damon Hill leaves his pursuers far behind on the way to victory at the Canadian Grand Prix

Photograph: Claire Mackintosh/Empics

GRAND PRIX '96 RACE SCHEDULE

French GP
June 30
British GP
July 14
German GP
July 28
Hungarian GP
August 11
Belgian GP
August 25
Italian GP
September 8
Portuguese GP
September 22
Japanese GP
October 13

Team Position
Check Line:
0891 891 806

Results &
Top 50
Teams:
0891 891 807

Calls cost 39p per minute cheap rate,
49p per minute at all other times.
Rules are as previously published and are available on request.



WIN a drive in a Grand Prix car

The Dream Team manager with the highest number of points at the end of the Grand Prix Championship season will win our top prize - a drive in a 650bhp F1 car.

You will be flown to the AGS team's training school in the south of France for the most exhilarating experience of your life. The school specialises in F1 courses and provides all the racewear and instruction you will need for a day driving F1 and other single seat cars.

INDIVIDUAL GRAND PRIX PRIZES STILL TO BE WON

You can enter our Formula 1 Dream Team game at any time during the grand prix season. Even if you don't win our top prize, don't worry, there are still prizes to be won with each grand prix race. Enter for the French Grand Prix and you could win tickets to the German Grand Prix.

Get The Independent on Wednesday 26 or Thursday 27 June for details on how to register.

DREAM TEAM CANADIAN GRAND PRIX PRIZE WINNER

Congratulations to Tim Kerr, from Bangor, County Down and his team Hit & Run. He has won a day out testing with the Tyrrell Formula One team at Silverstone.

Join over 25,000 readers who are playing Formula 1 Dream Team

مكتبة الأصل

Grand Prix Shopping List

POINTS SCORED

DRIVERS	WEEKLY POINTS	SINCE 11/2/96	
£25m	0	117	
1 M Schumacher	0	117	
£23m	15	97	
2 J Alesi	36	194	
3 D Hill	36	194	
£20m	0	52	
4 G Berger	0	52	
£18m	19	68	
5 D Coulthard	-5	48	
6 E Irvine	26	126	
7 J Villeneuve	26	126	
£13m	14	76	
8 M Hakkinen	-1	43	
9 H H Frentzen	22	38	
£10m	4	51	
10 M Brundle	8	41	
11 R Barrichello	2	5	
12 J Herbert	2	74	
£8m	13 M Salo	0	46
14 P Lamy	0	20	
£4m	15 P Diniz	0	57
16 U Katayama	-4	5	
17 J Verstappen	-2	5	
18 O Panis	2	0	
£3m	19 L Badoer	0	-6
20 R Rosset	-3	5	
21 A Montermini	0	-3	
£2m	22 G Fisichella	0	3
23 V Sospini	0	0	
24 T Marques	0	-5	
25 F Lagorce	0	0	
26 H Noda	0	0	
27 T Inoue	0	0	
£1m	28 M Blundell	0	0
29 J-C Bouillon	0	0	
30 K Brack	0	0	
31 K Butt	0	0	
32 E Collard	0	0	
33 N Fontana	0	0	
34 D Franchitti	0	0	
35 N Larini	0	0	
36 J Magnussen	0	0	
37 A Prost	0	0	
38 G Tarquini	0	0	
39 K Wendlinger	0	0	

DRIVER OF THE DAY: MARTIN BRUNELLE

A slightly controversial choice, this, as you can make a pretty strong case for Damon Hill to be Driver of the Day. But that would be boring, and he doesn't need the points, and anyway Martin Brundle is a jolly nice bloke.

Sunday was the East Anglian's 150th grand prix, and he celebrated with one of his most impressive drives for years, full of aggression and

raw speed. A little too aggressive, if anything, for just as he was looking like the quickest man around, and had the beating of the McLarens, he swiped the nose of his Jordan off against the back end of Pedro Lamy's revolving Minardi. But sixth was some consolation, and Martin will feel confident now that he has what it takes to challenge his quick team-mate Barrichello.



and for the Monaco hero Olivier Panis, who seems to be making a habit of being fast in the morning warm-up before the race: they must brew particularly strong coffee in the Ligier motor-home.

But the most heartening Dream Team points scorer is also the most unexpected: a representative of the Nightmare Team, Minardi: Giancarlo Fisichella, who managed, for once, to avoid driving into his team-mate, and kept his pretty but criminally slow car circulating all afternoon for eighth place and eight lovely Dream Team points. Steady on, Giancarlo, or you might make it as far as a grand total of zero...

Overall Top 50 Dream Teams

Fifty teams are in joint 1st position with 361 points

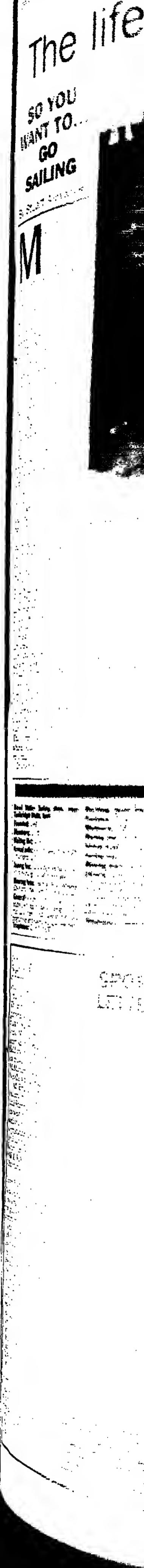
1 The 7 Percenters	1 Rice F1	1 PJB Racetecc
1 Follow Me Please	1 Bryan's Bullets	1 Micro Power
Racing	1 Jack Burchell Ford	1 Wilkys
1 Drack	1 Inglis Team	1 Williams
1 Hill's Decline	1 Sicol Racing	1 Orkney F1 GP
1 Stagnant 3	1 Team Muttley	1 Ruddocks Racers
1 Smith's Sizzlers	1 Nathan	1 Ascending
1 Emily Zoom	1 Suths	Mode Alfa
1 Track Suit	1 Ollie's Team	1 JTF 1
Racing UK	1 Charlton Lamb	1 Aphex Twin Cars
1 Eagle Racing	1 Dave's Drivers	1 Larkeys Magic
1 Skidlids	1 Team Milne	1 Palace GP
1 Team Shambles	1 Go Willit Go	1 Brixton 1
1 Overdrive	1 Sandow 2	1 Leading Lights
1 Diesel Dreamers	1 Piston Broke 2	1 Scott One
1 Vernotti Racing	1 The 85 Bears	1 Inter-Netty Norton
1 Cockney Racers	1 Girdlers Grid Stars	
	1 The Dukes of Hazzod	
	1 Mystic Murray's F1	
	1 Phoenix Racing	

CHASSIS

£20m	40 Benetton	16	92
41 Williams	20	133	
£18m	42 Ferrari	-5	95
43 McLaren	14	94	
£15m	44 Sauber	10	44
45 Jordan	13	42	
£10m	46 Ligier	0	59
47 Tyrrell	-4	25	
£5m	48 Arrows	-3	-11
23m	49 Minardi	11	-8
£1m	50 Ford	-1	-8

ENGINES

£26m	51 Renault	20	136
£18m	52 Ferrari	0	110
£15m	53 Mercedes	16	111
212m	54 Peugeot	14	57
£10m	55 Mugen	0	91
£8m	56 Ford V10	13	64
26m	57 Yamaha	0	39
£4m	58 Hart	0	13
£3m	59 Ford Zetec V8	0	0
£2m	60 Ford ED V8	12	34



The life for a budding Mr Christian

SO YOU WANT TO... GO SAILING

By Stuart Alexander

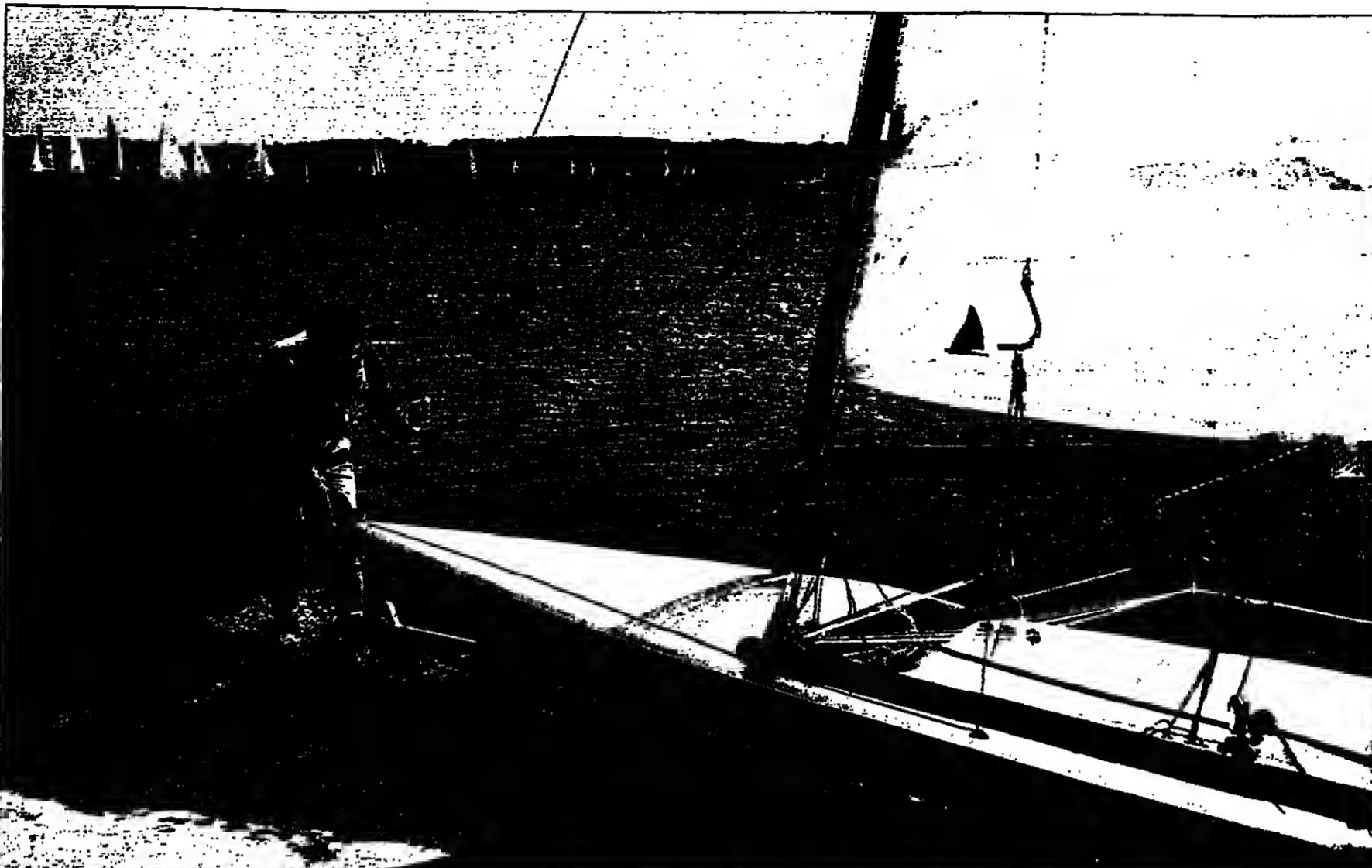
Mucking about in boats appeals to even the most convinced of couch potatoes. Sailing can be fun, available to all and enjoyed in myriad different ways. The spirit of Arthur Ransome and his *Swallows and Amazons* adventures lives on. Whenever there is a bit of water there will be a way of sailing on it, from small boats in creeks to bigger yachts offshore, for budding racers or gentle cruisers. But whatever the location, the images of billowing sails and healthy hair streaming in bracing wind remain the same and the swoosh of a hull through water just as exciting.

Then there is the social side. Yacht clubs have an indefinable image of snobbery, gin and money. The price of the equipment would, at times, make Kenneth Clark's eyes water. But from five-year-olds bobbing about in pram dinghies to grandmothers having a go at windsurfing, all conditions of mankind are attracted to the game.

There is a difference between wanting to go sailing and wanting to join a yacht club, particularly the right yacht club. Many yacht owners do not belong to a club, and many club members do not go sailing, or even motor boating, and perhaps the majority of people who go sailing do not own a boat. But there are many who hanker after belonging to the right club.

These tend to be the "royals" - the Royal Yacht Squadron in Cowes, the Royal Thames in London and royal clubs in every big yachting centre in Britain - where what matters is who you know. You cannot apply to join but must be proposed and seconded by existing members. Even so, they are not that expensive, with a top subscription of £500 a year, and often less than £250. They vary in the quality of their facilities. The London ones - such as the Royal Ocean Racing Club - are also small hotels, often with reciprocal facilities, allowing you to use other clubs. Most sailing and yacht clubs welcome new members. They often also own boat parks where you can keep a dinghy, or have moorings for keelboats.

In this most equipment-dominat-



No substitute for the basics: a member prepares to go out on the water at Bewl Valley Sailing Club, near Tunbridge Wells, in Kent

Photograph: Sarah Bancroft

ed of equipment sports, you need not splash out on a boat. But you do need to decide what type of sailing you are after and then to attack the vast library of information that exists on how to enjoy it.

There are three stages to be passed. First, learn the basics of the game; second, settle on the level you aim to play on; and third, find a group with which to play it. There are choices between inland or coastal sailing, dinghy or keelboat, and whether you wish to sail as crew or part of a crew. Your decision may be governed by where you live, how far you want to travel, what is available and what you want to spend. You will need to budget for the specialist clothes for when it is cold, wet and miserable. Some schools, especially for windsurfing, provide wetsuits or other gear, but you will need your own, particularly footwear.

There is no substitute for learning properly all the basics. Ideally this would be in a dinghy. And talk of certificates of competence is important because, although the RYA fights hard for its principle of education rather than regulation, other

European countries already require a licence. At the moment in Britain, anyone can take to the water in any boat, at any age, without licence or insurance, but it is only a matter of time before the legislators make such a rich vein.

Once you have learnt to put sails up and down, adjust them in and out, sail upwind and down, leave a mooring and regain it, there are dozens of types of dinghy to choose from, too many in truth. Pick one, talk to the class association and find a convenient club.

Those looking for crewing jobs might also put cards on club notice boards. But you would do better to turn up, ask for the local yacht pub, or ask your school instructor if he knows of anyone looking for crew.

But with dinghies starting at £300 secondhand, you could always buy a boat for yourself.

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Those vital dos and don'ts

You enter a minefield of jargon, etiquette, expertise and technology when you first take up sailing. But:

- 1 Do not become depressed at the number of times you hear "No, not like that, we don't do it like that." The basic isn't do not try to give the impression you know more than you do. Be honest about your search for information and experience but no more than quietly enthusiastic about volunteering to do every job in sight.
- 2 Do make sure that if you throw up, you do so to leeward (best start with the jargon now), that is downwind. Under no circumstances watch if the skipper or his wife are doing the same.
- 3 Try and look under 30 if applying to one of the senior clubs, as they have now realised the average age of their members is climbing alarmingly.
- 4 Create an opportunity to interview any prospective skipper and inspect his yacht. If he is that desperate for a beginner, there has to be a reason.

Volleyball pair come in from the cold

ATLANTA COUNTDOWN

No 2 AMANDA GLOVER and AUDREY COOPER

Beach volleyball is making its debut as a medal sport at the Atlanta Olympics and Britain will be represented by the pairing of Amanda Glover, 25, and Audrey Cooper, 31.

It will be the first time a British volleyball team, either indoor or beach, has qualified for the Olympics. The duo guaranteed their place in March. They are the present English champions, and rank fourth in Europe.

During the past year they have competed in the World Beach Championships in Brazil, Australia, Puerto Rico, Indonesia and Japan.

Glover and Cooper, however, have not had the exotic training locations of their opponents. Not for them the beaches of Bondi, California or Hawaii - the British participants practise next to the pier on Bournemouth beach.

During the week they train at the Ruskin Lido, Middlesex, and head south each weekend to hit the sand, come rain or shine. "We have to get out there, even if we are wearing goggles for rain rather than sunglasses," Glover says.

By day, Glover works for Hackney council leisure services as a recreation officer. Cooper



Champions: Amanda Glover (above) and Audrey Cooper



Champions: Amanda Glover (above) and Audrey Cooper

earns her living as publicity manager for Racal, the company that sponsors the team.

Their nine-to-five occupations have not dented their faith in the Olympic dream. "People warn us not to be overawed, to enjoy the experience," Cooper says. "But you are never satisfied with just getting there. We want to do well."

The pair are ranked 15th in the world, but of those going to Atlanta, they will rank 12th. Glover is optimistic about their chances. She says: "We should be OK. Our results so far aren't bad and we're looking for a top-eight position. But it's always there, in the back of our minds. We'd like a medal."

Glover grew up by the seaside in Weymouth, Dorset, but became interested in the sport only five years ago when she went to a beach volleyball tournament.

"I went for a bit of fun, got hooked, and it started from there," she adds that although it is an attractive sport for spectators, the physical demands are rigorous. "When people come to watch, they realise it's not as easy as they'd thought."

Cooper agrees. "Because there are only two of you on court, you get through a great deal of work." But the work has been worth it. "This is a dream come true. Two and a half years ago it was an ambition, an idea. But now it's a reality."

The pair have been surprised by the attention they have been receiving this year. Their team manager, Marzena Bogdanowicz, has been inundated with requests for interviews. "It's been so hectic recently, none of us had a chance to stop and think about it."

For Glover, too, their achievements are just starting to sink in. "It's really exciting, but it's only in the last few months that it's hit us - we're going to the Olympics."

Nick Harris

Seedorf
at full
dishant

SIX CLUBS AND HOW TO BECOME MEMBERS

ROYAL YACHT SQUADRON Cowes, Isle of Wight. Tel: 0983 562222. Fax: 0983 562222. Email: royalsquadron@islandnet.co.uk

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From Paul Kay
Regarding Richard Edmondson's comments ("The Final Word", *Independent*, 17 June) about England's first goal against Scotland. The move that led to the goal began with Southgate heading the ball back to Seaman who then threw it out to Neville. There then followed a period of "poncing about" in midfield involving six players and seven passes before Redknapp fed McManaman who in turn passed to Neville who crossed to Shearer.

All England's players, with the exception of Gascoigne, Adams and Sheringham, were involved. It showed that England can compete with the route-one approach of the sophisticated Dutch, i.e. Bergkamp's goal against Switzerland.

Yours sincerely,
PAUL KAY
Christchurch, Dorset

From Frank Desmond
Now that Euro 96 is well under way it is a better time than most to air my pet whinge about TV football commentaries: the infuriating habit of the "back-up" commentator of making his point regardless of any development in the play.

So he's talking about the recent substitution and meanwhile that pass back to the goalkeeper has been interpreted. However, that's no reason to let the other bloke describe what's going on. The polite word for that is ego-tripping and if you had a quid for every time it is going to happen during the tournament then you would not need to buy lottery tickets.

Yours sincerely,
FRANK DESMOND
London, W6

From Michael Sloane
Your photograph of the front benches of the Lord's Pavilion, published on page 8 of your 14 June issue, contains one horrifying image.

No, not the lady sitting resplendent watching the England and

SPORTS LETTERS

New Zealand women's team playing but the gentleman behind correctly dressed in straw hat and necktie and, horror of horrors, drinking a pint of beer. Do not the regulations of the MCC forbid taking food and beverages out of the bars in the pavilion on the outside benches?

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL SLOWE
London NW1

From John Cameron

So, the bosses of English rugby have once again managed to shoot rugby in the foot. Their amazingly selfish stance towards the TV negotiations shows how little regard they have for the wider public by denying five rights to terrestrial television, but also towards the game itself, and demonstrates how far they have been stamped by the panic of professionalism.

It would seem obvious that if northern hemisphere rugby is to flourish, and have any chance of matching the standards set by New Zealand, Australia and South Africa, all the home nations need the resources to develop and produce worthwhile competition for each other. The inadvisability of "one-off" matches in the southern hemisphere has already been demonstrated by the England soccer squad's Far East debacle.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN CAMERON
St Albans, Hertfordshire

Letters should be marked "For publication" and contain daytime and evening phone numbers. They should be sent to Sports Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, London E14 5DL. They may be shortened for reasons of space.

PICK OF THE WEEK

THIS WEEK/Racing
Royal Ascot, Ascot Racecourse, Berkshire.

The most famous and unique flat race meeting in the world commenced yesterday and is comfortably the most valuable race meeting in Britain, surpassing the £2m prize-money mark for the first time this year. Royal Ascot is also Britain's most popular race meeting with attendance predicted to exceed 200,000 over four days.

Certain other meetings may boast a classic but, with as many as 15 plates to choose from, it is not unusual for racing to be matched on the overall class of racing found over four days at Royal Ascot. The Thursday may attract the biggest crowds, featuring the Gold Cup, but, with a royal procession taking place every day, all days are essentially the same. Despite the enduring popularity of this event, it is still possible to gain entry for as little as £5 in the Silver Ring, or £28 per day for Grandstand badges.

RACES Ascot: Ascot Racecourse, Ascot, Berks. Tel: 0344 222 2222. Fax: 0344 222 2222. Email: ascot@ascot.com

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PICK OF THE WEEKEND

SAT and SUN/Motorsport
MCN British Superbikes Championship, Brands Hatch.

Brands Hatch plays host to the fifth round of the MCN British Superbike Championship this weekend with a packed programme of the best motorcycle sport in Britain. Hot favourites are the Cadbury's Yamaha team, who currently placed first and second respectively in the championship.

The two Superbike races will be supported by a varied programme of top quality racing including the British 125 and 250 Supercars, the Mobil 1 Triumphant Speed Triple Challenge and the British Thunderbike Supercup. In addition, the Motorcycle City Superbikes Challenge offers competitors, aged between 16 and 20, the chance to follow in the footsteps of previous competitors who have gone on to earn Grand Prix titles.

To get there: Bands Hatch is situated on junction 10 of the M25, 20 miles from central London and can easily be accessed from junction 3, Sheerwater, the M25, and is linked to the M20 via junction 10. For more information telephone 0171-228 5100.

Practice on Saturday at 9am. Adult tickets are £5 and children's £3. Racing is on Sunday at 1pm. Adult tickets for Bands Hatch are £12 and children's £6. Practice and racing are free. Call 0171-228 5100 for further information.

STADIUM CANNICK: Moorside Stadium, Idenway, Rotherham. Tel: 0114 261 2222. From the M1, junction 19, and from the south of junction 13. From the M20, leave at junction 10 from both the Northumbrian and Southern routes. From the A1(M), junction 13, and from the A63,

10 racing

Bijou D'Inde has the final word

RICHARD EDMONDSON

reports from Royal Ascot

For those who had been told a French horse would collect the St James's Palace Stakes yesterday the morning results section must have a reassuring look. Bijou D'Inde was the winner. The colt's connections are not exactly Gallic, however, as he is owned and trained by Scotsmen and when he breathes in after exercise each morning it is great gulps of North Yorkshire air which are taken into the bellows.

This was the Group One race that was billed as the showdown between the Guineas winners. Mark Of Esteem had won the Newmarket version and was running for the home side (despite running no British connection), while Ashkalani and Spinning World had captured the French and Irish equivalents for Chantilly and were thought to have it between them. Bijou D'Inde had lost in two of the Guineas and was considered little more than a member of the cast.

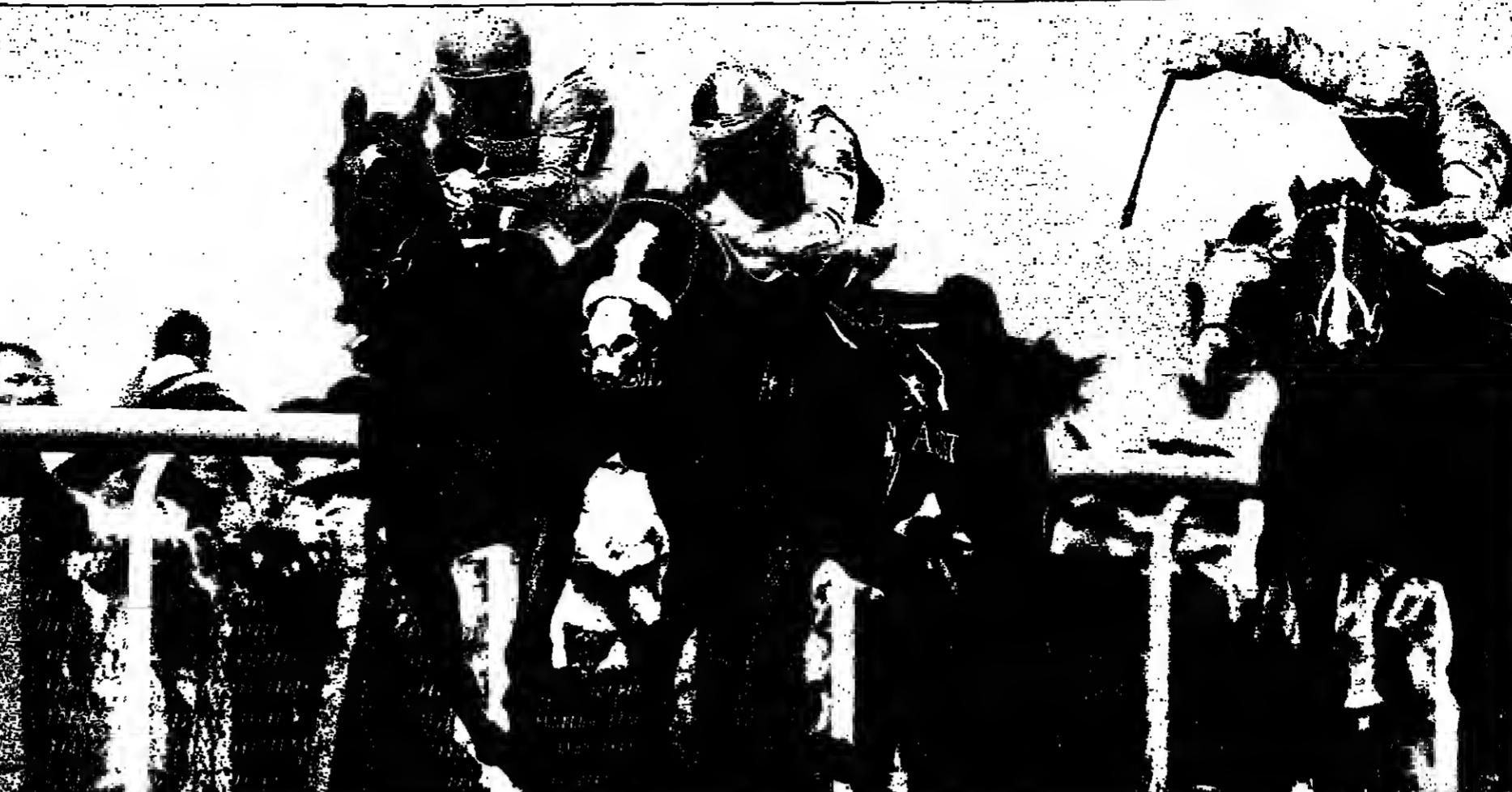
This lowly place in the production looked reasonable enough as the gawky chestnut set off in front, a figure to be shot at. As the Ascot bell tolled it seemed to signal his chances, Ashkalani sweeping by with ease. But then Bijou D'Inde jumped outside his pit, Jaso Weaver galvanised his mount to a serious reply up the rails and when the post arrived he was a head back in front.

The Prince of Wales's Stakes maintained the staggering posthumous success of the Moller brothers, who bequeathed funds to keep their chocolate and brown colours alive. Peotrie carries the flag and yesterday First Island proved he is at Blackpool stands performer either. He broke the track record.

The winner was partnered by Michael Hills, who switched from Cain and Abel mode when he passed his twin brother, Richard, in the straight, flicking his brother's mount, Mootjoy, across the snout with his whip as he surged through to success.

Mark Johnston, the colt's trainer, supplied a military metaphor for all this, suggesting in Corporal Jones style, that the French do not like it up them. It was out difficult to imagine the Middleham trainer as a nationalist as he disported himself in a waistcoat and tie of his family tartan.

Johnston admitted that when Bijou D'Inde first arrived at Kingsley House he was tempted to put him straight back in the crate and thump some nails.



Bijou D'Inde (left) rallies to repel the favourite, Ashkalani (sheepskin noseband), in yesterday's St James's Palace Stakes at Royal Ascot

Photograph: Robert Hallam

Stone Ridge heading straight for success

GREG WOOD

Last year's Royal Hunt Cup provided one of those rare (to be honest, almost unique) occasions when a big handicap unfolded entirely as predicted, as Chickawitsa cut out the running from stall 31 to give the fair side a crucial advantage, and set the race up for Realities.

Bitter experience tells us that our chance of a repeat performance today is slightly smaller than that of the Princess of Wales arriving in the Queen's carriage. None the less, it seems reasonable to adopt the same initial approach to the Hunt Cup, the biggest betting race of the week, and attempt to find the early pace which always favours one side or the other.

This year, it is a case of the same horse, but the other side. Once again, Chickawitsa seems

set to make the running, but

is drawn seven, and with another probable front-runner, Ger's Royale, also the inside side, there seems no reason to look beyond stall 15 for the winner. It is also worth recording that Nick Cheyne, Ascot's clerk of the course, commented yesterday that despite the new full-cover watering system, he expects the stands' side to be "slightly favoured" as the meeting progresses.

This immediately excludes

such well-supported horses as Bloomberg and New Century, and when those with no obvious chance on form are discarded, the short-list is very short.

Yeast, the ante-post favourite, has an outstanding chance from stall three, but at such relatively short odds it is a serious concern that his stamina may not stretch to a fast-run straight mile on one of Britain's most demanding tracks. He is worth a small saving bet on the off-

chance that it will, but a much more interesting proposition is STONE RIDGE (nap 4.20).

The Lincoln winner is back on a straight track for the first time since Doncaster, and while his success there came on very soft ground, he also has plenty of form on a fast surface. From stall nine and with Pat Eddery holding the reins, he has an outstanding chance, and the 25-1 available with Coral and William Hill this morning will

surely be the best value bet of the week.

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HYPERION'S TV TIPS

but, Moonshine Girl and Dancing Drop were separated by a short-head at Sandown, again in a fast time, and look the dangers.

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Top hats keep revellers in the shade

Serena Mackesy on racegoers who turn away from the track

The great thing about an event like Royal Ascot is that it brings home those little lessons about why dress becomes archaic. Morning dress, for instance; it looks absolutely terrible with sunglasses. On a baking day with that little hint of thunder, the toffs in the Royal Enclosure sported them heroically. Well, less heroically than heroically, but what the heck.

Top hats, actually, are great disguise: they make everyone look identical, so the lighting pack of press photographers on the balcony above fail to spot adulterers until they have passed by.

Those feathered cartwheels women sport are even more efficient: from above, a woman in the Royal Enclosure looks like a fried egg, a jammy dodger or a croupier with legs. What she doesn't look like is someone with a face.

One gets the feeling, though, that you don't get the full experience in the Enclosure. All human life mills around outside it: the smogging, the fighting, the hand-waving, the big teeth.

What is really weird about Royal Ascot, as opposed to your average meeting, is that not only does it attract a crowd who don't make a habit of racing, but half of them aren't even up for the business of horseflesh at all.

Even the stands round the paddock are packed with women in hats whose backs were turned resolutely away from the parading nags and toward the costumes in *Ching Ching Bang Bang*.

"What does she think she's wearing?"

Royal Ascot is quintessentially British. One sees very few complications that vary from the pale or the florid, and an array of sun-faded chintz dresses. Racers may attempt to dress-down from paddock to grandstand and spaces the Royal gang from

up like they're going to a benefit gala for Ivana Trump, but they still sink to the tops of their heels in the car parks, their top bits and bottom bits never quite match and they still kiss as though it's a tasteless foreign habit. Clogged in the tunnel which runs below ground from paddock to grandstand when the horses hit the straight,

overexposure to the proletariat, one felt a bit like one was trapped at a cocktail party on the outer fringes of Hades. Many people never made it out of the champagne bar at all, but watched the proceedings on telly. They missed that powerful wave of sound that rushed through the grandstand when the horses hit the straight,

but at least the drinking – and with biciclo Mumm at £35 a bottle, drinking is a serious business here – wasn't interrupted. A happy blonde woman clutched a half-bottle with joy as *Beaujolais D'Inde* burst through in a photo-finish. She had had a pound on him at 9-1. "Another winner," she said, "and I'll have paid for this drink."

Photograph: Robert Hallam

"Ascot attracts a crowd who don't make a habit of racing and half of them aren't even up for the horseflesh at all"

Little murmur rumbled

PON

HYPERION

sk 2.50 Alpine Time 3.25 Insider Trade Dancing Image 4.35 Bold Elect 5.10 Elstark 5.40 Sharpshooter

hind to firm.

Straight - stands' side in 47 - outside; round course -

SWAY ADVANTAGE: None.

hind course. A sharp track with tight bends.

hind course



Did you guess our hidden personality?

The 24-year-old who likes to let off steam riding Harley-Davidsons and shouting at footballers – but never her favourite Gary Lineker, who played for her local side, Barcelona – is Conchita Martinez. She became a national hero two years ago when she became the first Spanish woman to win Wimbledon. She is seeded No 3 in this year's All England Championships.

Heroes and villains: England's players and supporters celebrate after the Scotland captain and No 10 Gary McAllister's second-half goal in Ollie's save by the England goalkeeper David Seaman, enabling the hosts to stay a goal in front in the crucial Group A clash at Wembley on Saturday (top). Just 60 seconds later, McAllister's anguish is multiplied as England's mercurial midfielder Paul Gascoigne soaks up the sun-drenched Wembley crowd following his superb solo goal (below).

Photographs: David

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3017. Wednesday 19 June By Aquila Tuesday's Solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9							
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ACROSS

- Spill crack of the highest quality (6)
- Cross-grained stump of tree delivered (8)
- Reclining sort suffering heat-burns (9)
- Grant taking a Washington road? (5)
- Response from the choir (4)
- Trouble with apple-trees can be brief and unimportant (4-6)
- Unvarying, even in costume dress (7)
- Troy edition of paper (6)
- Fields of study with authentic manuscript (6)
- Fence complaining bitterly (7)
- Myrtle to marry, knot to be tied (5-5)
- Maximum temperature in freezer, ordinarily (4)
- Plant in neat border (5)
- The wind, said Pops, is all over the place (9)
- How to devolve the sovereign? (9)
- Drink permitted in Swiss Cottage (6)
- Untidy form of Adamitism (6)
- Belief in existence of gods is in people addressed (6)
- Last defender in battle at Stamford Bridge? (10)
- Sort of coupling that is all-embracing (9)
- In the blissful state of a gnome? (8)
- Down south in new town in Wiltshire (7)
- Holiday in a bay (6)
- Road repaired around cricket club for match (6)
- Solemn-looking young thing in barn, possibly (5)
- Third man to opening pair (4)

DOWN

- Aesthetically pleasing flutes at dance (8)
- Point of story delivered with cordial manner (9)
- But one can make square cuts in it (4)
- Anguish of guys in the wrong? (7)
- Pile buried about in a Dickensian office (10)
- Nothing to report of what was passed in Japan (5)
- in the blissful state of a gnome? (8)
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Oh, he's bent it.



Euro96

Spice up your snack life.

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